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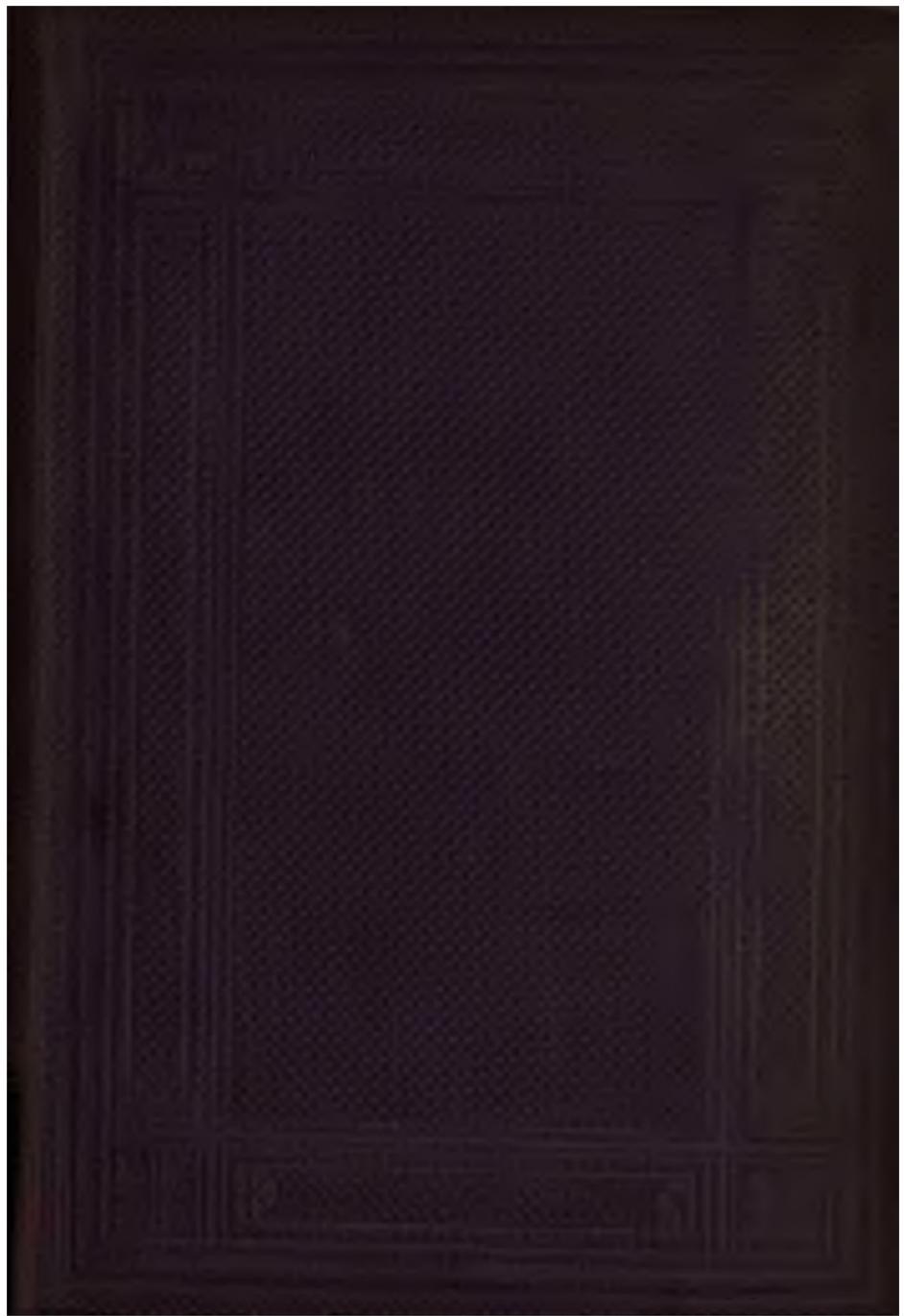
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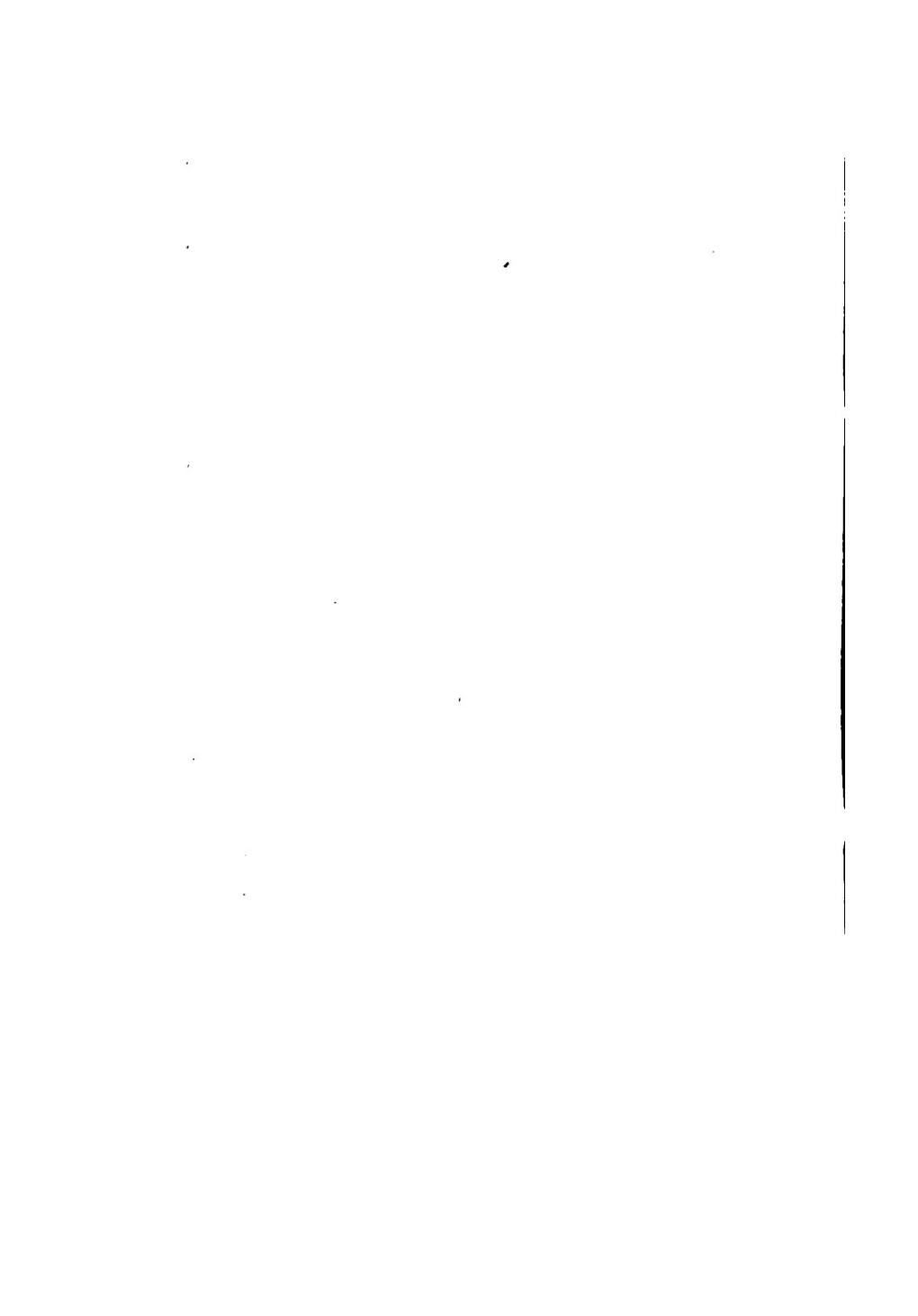








ALICE LISLE.



ALICE LISLE:
A TALE
OF
PURITAN TIMES.

BY THE
REV. R. KING, B.A.,
AUTHOR OF "ANGELS' WORK," "SINGERS OF THE SANCTUARY," &c.

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Alice Tisle:

A TALE OF PURITAN TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

IN few countries of the old world have changes been more rapid and varied than in England. Dress, manners, and even language, have undergone many alterations, and, as a matter of course, our dwellings have changed with the fancies or improved condition of their owners. The increasing wealth of families and a widely-extended commerce have added to the comforts of life, until the labourer enjoys and esteems as a necessary of life much that was denied to the noble of earlier times. From having been a purely agricultural people, exporting our wool for the active artisans of the Low Countries, we have become the greatest traders of the world. Houses and lands have changed their owners and their names; new roads have replaced the byeways along which the traveller, until very late times, moved at the risk of his life. The waggons which supplanted the pack-horses, and conveyed merchandise to the ports, have yielded to canals and railroads, which like a network intersect the country, and almost annihilate our ideas of distance and space. A few baronial halls, shorn of their former extent, yet improved by modern art, exist, as if to tell the story of bygone days, and of the

nobles who ruled the country with more than regal power. Here and there, too, we find an old fortified house, which by its massive strength and watch-towers reminds us of the watchfulness in which our fore-fathers lived, and the care that was requisite to protect life and property.

It is one of these houses that we are about to describe. Massively built with large stones hewn from a neighbouring quarry, it was more in the character of a fortress than a house: the windows were small and admitted little light; the centre hall, which opened at once from the outer door, was the dwelling-room of the family; dark passages ran along the back of the house leading to stone stairs, which led to galleries divided by heavy oak wainscot into sleeping-rooms, or stores. Four towers at irregular distances served as a means of offence to an approaching enemy, or as places of retreat if the walls should be scaled. A moat extended round the outer walls, and prevented all approach except under the gateway-tower, pierced on all sides to command the drawbridge; the moat was always deepened on any threatening of war, and the walls were shorn of ivy, or any creeping plants that might assist in an escalade.

At the time of which we are writing the watch-towers had long been used as barns and outhouses; dogs were kept in them to announce the approach of intruders. As evening drew on, the cattle were driven in from the pastures, and milked in rude sheds reared against the inner sides of the walls. In the early spring the ewes were brought home by the shepherds,

and the young lambs reared by the servants of the house. Work ended, the farm-labourers and shepherds came and seated themselves by the glowing log, or in summer time round the great oak table in the hall, when the rude jokes of the village were retailed, and the newest scandal was repeated. Occasionally a traveller was added to the family circle, and he was ever a welcome guest, for he brought news from the town, and from the great world from which they seemed to be cut off. They heard where the king had been ; how matters were going on at the Hague ; whether there was to be war with France ; and to this was added London news, then, even more than now, the centre of trade and of intercourse with foreign countries.

The interior of the house displayed none of the care of modern times ; everything was scrupulously clean, but the furniture was scanty, and evidently intended for use, rather than ornament. In the hall stood one or more oak tables, with a heavy form on each side, and a settle was placed on either side of the huge fireplace ; under the beam called the traby sat the master and mistress ; the former, as a religious man, read the Bible or Fox's "Book of Martyrs," while the mistress and her maids knitted stockings or wound the wool. The wealthy yeoman displayed an array of bright metal dishes on the shelves of the dressers, and beneath these were ranged in order wooden platters for more common use. A large chest, adorned with grotesque figures, and with the owner's cipher, was used to keep the more precious garments, or the best linen of the house ;

and this, with a few more stools, completed the furniture of the hall.

The upper chambers were worse provided : the labourers lay down to rest upon straw ; one, or at most two, large oak bedsteads, which had descended from generation to generation, filled the room ; a table and a stool were the only additions, if we except the bedding, an object of great value and care in most houses. There was a haunted chamber, where no one ever did or ever could sleep, and by which not children alone, but men and women, passed with a quick step and light tread.

There was very little difference in the outward appearance of the yeoman and the labourer ; their intercourse with each other was constant, and they were widely separated from the town population. They took their meals at the same table, and were served from the same dish. Bread and meat was the midday meal, and at morning and evening huge bowls of milk and brown bread were the almost invariable diet. The Reformation had begun to diffuse a desire for improved education ; the more religious of the yeomen required grace to be said before meals, and prayers were said in the evening before they parted for rest. Those who liked the form of prayers set forth for the Church of England used portions of the Book of Common Prayer, and said the Psalms appointed for the day's service ; others, and a large number they were, whose minds had been stirred by the excitement of constant religious discussion, used extempore prayers, long, not always reverent, but full of that energy of expression which accom-

panies the outpourings of a devout but badly educated mind.

Among the number of those who had been stirred by the new teaching was Joseph Gifford. He had been taught early to read the Bible, and his enthusiastic disposition led him to treasure up the terrible denunciations against sin with which the Bible abounds. He read the history of Israel's fall, and applied it to his own country, and his austere disposition rejoiced in the changes which he saw going on around him. Puritanism was making rapid strides; and he framed his own house, as he said, on the Christian model. He forbade oaths, then frightfully common; he prevented idle conversation, and exchanged the rude songs of the labourers for hymns and psalms, which he taught them orally; he ceased from frequenting the taverns on market-days, and attended an exposition of the Scripture from some gifted minister. There was a change in the conversation conformably, as was thought, to the requirement of the Apostles; and Scripture names and terms were introduced into every-day life. But Joseph Gifford not only assumed an outward appearance of religion, he endeavoured to live up to his profession, and largely helped the poor of his own and neighbouring parishes.

Mary Gifford was the very opposite to her husband,—small in figure, but active; she was cheerful as the day, and in her high spirits would often forget the strictness of the Sunday, and begin to tell stories of the great Elizabeth, in whose court her father had been a servant. She was an ardent admirer of royalty; and, without understanding the reason, concluded that

with its downfall would come England's decay. The good Queen Bess was an endless theme for praise, and wonderful were the stories told of her preparations to meet the Armada.

After his conversion, as Joseph Gifford called the change in the conduct of his house, for he did not change his religious opinions, Mary was occasionally rebuked for her warm advocacy of the court, and for approving their profane conduct.

There was a great change in Gifford, for with his new religious views he had adopted republican opinions; and he cherished them more strongly from the danger of uttering them.

He had stories of Elizabeth, but they were of the suspicions which will always attach to her character, of her tyrannical temper; he admired her as the conqueror of the Spaniards, he abhorred her as a follower of Baal, a lover of Popish superstitions; and at length Mary was compelled to yield to his stern denunciations. Puritanism reigned throughout the house, and the king's name was seldom mentioned but with disrespect.

One child, the last of three, two having died in infancy, remained to give brightness to the Giffords' home, and Alice Gifford was a source of daily happiness to both parents. To her, the father would unbend and relax his features into a smile, for her he would bring home the early flowers of spring, and teach her that there was one Almighty power who created the world and all that is therein. As she grew in years he instructed her in the faith of a Christian, and often puzzled the child with the deeper mysteries of

the Puritan doctrines. So long as the family went to church, Alice was questioned on her return on the sermon, and on the lessons appointed for the day's service. Even the few pence which were given her she was encouraged to give again in alms to the poor; and every endeavour was used to train her mind in the Puritan discipline.

Mary did not like the manner in which her child was brought up, but she yielded to her husband: yet she would, when alone, tell Alice the tales of former days; of the King Henry who had destroyed the monasteries, of the boy-king Edward, of the Protector Somerset, and of the Queen's court, in which her father, she proudly said, had served; now and then she added a fairy tale, or a legend of the neighbourhood. Mary was never idle, and the little Alice was trained early to work; she could knit and sew. In the long winter evenings she spun by the side of her mother, or listened to her father reading the Scriptures. Fair, and very gentle, the child seemed to be the good spirit of the house; she had her father's good sense and deep religious feelings, but she had her mother's cheerful and lively disposition, which enabled her to look on the bright side of life; and often, when oppressed by his own moody disposition or gloomy forebodings, would the child call back her father to cheerfulness, and almost happiness, by her vivacity and childish mirth.

The death of James I. of England and VI. of Scotland had placed Charles I. upon the throne, and the Puritan party, although kept down by the avowed dislike of Queen Elizabeth and the hatred of King

James, began to feel their power, and in growing numbers to speak of their grievances in anything but the language of suppliants. The King was called an *Agag*; the followers of his court were *Amalekites*; the bishops were children of Baal, and those who favoured them were *Prelatists*; the Scriptures were ransacked for epithets, and every curse was uttered in the language of Scripture, with a solemnity which at least evinced sincerity. Gifford entered into all the movements of his party; his wife knew nothing of his plans; naturally reserved, he became more thoughtful than ever; he spoke less of political matters; and although more frequently at market, it was evident that he went to town more often to hear sermons.

Mary observed, among the visitors to the Grange, many faces that she had never seen before; in the day time the new friends rode out with her husband, but in the evening there was always a religious discussion, which few could understand: the election of grace, the reprobation of the guilty, the number of the elect, the marks by which the elect children were known, the absurdity of forms in religious worship, or the necessity of a purely spiritual religion, were eagerly canvassed; often stories of the cruelty of Papists and Prelatists were added to give zest to the tales.

Not long after the accession of King Charles, a change took place in the Rector of Batcombe; and one of the new men, as the Puritans called the Church party, was appointed to the rectory. Mr. Wentworth taught the doctrine of the divine right of kings, and the duty of entire obedience to the royal power;

politics were often introduced into the sermons, and the doctrines which they would hardly have endured from their old Rector were scoffed at from the mouth of a young and inexperienced man. Their former Rector, although a royalist from principle, had little sympathy with the fierce controversies which raged around him. He tended the sick and dying with fidelity ; he warned the young men against the excesses so prevalent on all sides ; he disliked the Calvinistic doctrines then spreading in every direction ; and he had seen Gifford's gradual decline from Church communion with feelings of deep regret.

Before his death he sent for Gifford, and warned him of the consequences of his opinions. "I have long known," he said, "that with your new opinions on religion you have also adopted new views of political government. I have not spoken of this to any one. I have endeavoured to preach peace ; but, alas, I have cried Peace, and there is no peace." Gifford endeavoured to comfort the old Rector with hopes of better days, and spoke with fervour of his own religious views, and his hope that their Rector was leaving a world of sorrow for rest and peace.

"True," said the Rector, "I shall leave this wilderness, where I have toiled for nearly thirty years. But, Gifford, you remain ; and believe my last words, when you cease to respect religion because of mere matters of opinion, you will first overthrow the Altar, and then cast down the Throne."

Gifford did not reply : the Rector knew more than he thought any person had known of his opinions ; and he was aware of the distress which it would cause

many of his friends, whenever he acted openly, and cast off, as he intended to do, all respect for the Church and its teaching. He did not know fear; but he foresaw that the triumph of his principles would inflict suffering on many whom he had long esteemed as friends. The aged Rector's words were not forgotten, and for some time he did not go to town. An incident, trifling in itself, aroused Gifford: he had invited some of his neighbours to hear him read a volume of sermons which had been printed by a neighbouring Puritan minister: many went to hear him; until at length it came to the ears of the new Rector. Mr. Wentworth resolved to interfere, and told Gifford that he was breaking the law, in presuming to take upon himself the office of teacher.

"I do," said Gifford, "in my own house; it is my castle, and I have always read the Word of God there, and I will."

"Yes, to your own family," replied Mr. Wentworth.

"And to my friends, to any perishing souls, in spite of any one."

"No, Master Gifford," said Wentworth, "not in spite of me: if there are any perishing souls, they can come to church."

"To church!" said Gifford, sneeringly; "to church, indeed!"

"Yes," replied Mr. Wentworth; "to that church in which your fathers worshipped."

"And where I will never worship again," rejoined Gifford.

Mr. Wentworth left the Grange, and they who might have been good neighbours, for both possessed

good qualities, were, by the misfortunes of the times, irreconcilable enemies. Gifford had resolved to devote all his energies to the destruction of the Prelatists; and Wentworth, an active man, was bound by interest, as well as by feeling, to maintain the existing government. He was not better prepared than his party generally were for the strength of the Puritans; they had ministers in every town, and friends in almost every village. It is true that there were laws in the statute-book, and magistrates ready to execute those laws, but there was a spirit which, when once aroused, can seldom be subdued. It was vain to reason with men who answered arguments by asserting a divine call; who, if taunted with rebellion, answered that they were no more rebels than those who successfully but partially reformed the Church: they would make a clean sweep of all abuses, and deliver the Church and the nation from popish and prelatical rulers.

CHAPTER II.

GIFFORD became well known as an active leader of the Puritan party in Batcombe; his influence was considerable, and he extended it daily by a consistent life and unflinching support of his own party. The question of ship-money began to be mooted in the country districts, and although many murmured, few had the boldness to follow Hampden's example, and refuse payment. When the demand was made on Gifford, he refused to pay: his wife, who was pre-

sent, urged him strongly to pay a demand which it would cost twenty times as much to resist.

"Yes, Mary," he said, "but you do not understand that the demand is illegal, and therefore I refuse it."

"It is for the King's use, and for the King's navy. Pay it, Joseph," said Mary; "you say it is not lawful, but—"

"But, Mary," said Gifford, "it is not a woman's duty to contradict."

Mary was silent, and sorrowful.

He then said, "I refuse to pay the demand; and I will never pay it unless forced to do so." The collector, a neighbouring farmer, left him, and tried to induce some of his friends to influence him to obey the royal authority.

It was all in vain; Gifford knew the value of consistency, and he told his friends, as he had told his family, that he had counted the cost, that he would prefer imprisonment and loss, rather than submit to an unjust demand.

After a short interval a process was issued, and the sheriff appointed a day for the sale of the stock which had been seized. When the morning of sale drew on the roads in the neighbourhood gave signs of some movement, and the two parties saw that there would be a demonstration at the Grange. The King's party mustered that there might be a sale; the yeomen to prevent, if possible, the sale of the cattle; and if not able to do that, then they intended to annoy the purchasers and intimidate the authorities by their
rs and bold bearing. Gifford was silent, he
en care to avoid any breach of the law be-

yond refusing the levy. He treated the men who had charge of the cattle with kindness; he afforded the officers opportunity to shew the cattle, and thus won for himself the esteem of his friends, and excited more than he had ever done before the fears of his enemies. The proceedings had been costly, and the Exchequer had not spared Gifford; his neighbours saw beast after beast sold to pay a demand for a few shillings. Many gave vent to expressions of disgust and contempt for the royal authority, others, more prudent, were silent, but resolved. The King's party looked on as triumphant, and rallied the Puritans on their want of spirit, but it was a dearly-bought victory. Gifford was benevolent, and the poor thought that he had been robbed of his cattle; the yeomen viewed him as a defender of their rights, and as one who would suffer an injury rather than silently allow an injustice to be done to his class. His enemies saw only a crafty and designing man, ready to resist the royal authority, and anxious to teach instead of being taught; they knew that he was clever, for he did not allow himself in any hasty expressions, nor did he allow them to entrap him, as some tried to do, by expressing sympathy with him, in the hope that, when smarting under his loss, he would give them a chance of obtaining evidence of treason against him.

Every one in his household perceived that there was a change in the tone of Gifford's feelings. He had long ceased to attend church, but he now hindered his wife and daughter from going; they had often regretted that Mr. Wentworth had forsaken their house, where their former Rector was a frequent and

welcome guest, they were now to find that he would not be admitted to the Grange. The Prayer-book was disused and forbidden; long extempore prayers, sometimes offered by one of the "gifted brethren,"—who always came on Saturday, as if by chance,—at other times by Gifford himself, who always read a sermon during the week, and invited his friends to join with him in prayer, were the only religious services allowed at the Grange. The King was never prayed for, unless in the most insulting language, that he might be delivered from a popish queen and prelatist advisers.

Gifford was reserved, and it was with difficulty he could be induced to converse on any subjects not connected with their daily life. He laboured actively on his farm, took his rides with Alice, and left nothing uncared for.

Alice was growing into the young woman,—her fair complexion and habitual good temper won for her the admiration of all the village. She was not beautiful, for you could not fix on any feature and say it was perfect; but she was so gentle in manner, and so ready to do any act of kindness, that few approached without loving her. It was during one of their rides that Alice surprised her father by saying, after a long silence, "I have been thinking, father, what will be the end of all this."

"All what, Alice?" said Gifford. "We have not spoken a word for a mile, and you suddenly ask what will be the end of all this."

"Oh, I forgot, father," said Alice, laughing, "but had been thinking of our not going to church,

and having prayers at home, and that the church is every Sunday more empty and our house more full, and that —”

“ You had better not think about it, my child ; you are too young to understand ; and I hope you will never interfere with politics.”

“ But, father,” said Alice, “ I am not a child now ; I know why the cattle were sold ; I have often read your books, and I know that they are different from what you used to read, and that you would have no king to govern the country, and no bishops to rule the Church.”

Gifford was startled as if from a dream : he turned and looked at his daughter, and seemed to recognise that she was no longer a child. “ Alice, Alice,” he said, after a moment, “ who told you this ?”

“ No one, father, but I have read and thought, and although you never speak to us you are often troubled about these things ; mother does not understand them, but she knows you are very anxious and troubled at times.”

“ God forgive me, Alice ; I had hoped to keep all these things from you, and to bear my own burden ; it is ordered otherwise ; and you shall know, my child, what the Lord has laid upon us : it is His work, and who shall let it ?”

“ Father, if it is His work none can hinder it,—that we know.”

“ No, Alice, and none can hinder this work. In the length and breadth of the land ministers of truth have proclaimed His Word often in fear and trembling, but always in sincerity. The Word of the Lord has

reached many hearts, and the time is come when Zion will no more be desolate; the day of deliverance is at hand."

"Yes, father, there are many godly men who have come to our house, but they have no means of making known the Word; they cannot go to the church."

"They cannot now, Alice; but they may."

"When, father?"

Gifford sighed, and said slowly, "When it is God's will; but there will be much tribulation—much tribulation; fear, and the sword," he muttered.

"The sword, father! who will take the sword?" said Alice.

"What would you say, Alice, if your father took the sword, and if instead of training, as he used to do, for pleasure in his youthful days, he drew his sword in the Lord's battle?"

"I should be sorry, father, very sorry," said Alice; "and it would grieve mother almost to death."

"It is the will of the Lord, Alice," said her father.

"I never knew you do wrong, father; and if it were your duty, though I should be sorry, I should pray that you might have victory. I should pray for you,—yes, day and night,—and for your cause;" but —Alice paused. "But if, father, you are deceived, and you fail?"

"My child, success will bring nothing to your father. It is the Lord's work; and if He blesses the work we shall succeed; if not, Alice, God's will be done."

"Yes, father, God's will be done: I will try to say so."

"Alice, I did not think that I should have said so much to any one as I have said to you to-day : I will say yet more, that you may know why your father dares to resist the royal power. The King has encroached on our liberties, invaded our rights, and we have resolved rather to die free yeomen, such as our fathers were, than to live at the arbitrary will of one man. I have read the Word, and have often heard what was done in time of old to Amalek, and the nations whom God cast out : the Israelites gat not possession of the land by their own sword, it was the Lord, mighty in battle, who helped them ; and He will help us."

"But, father, are you sure that there will be war ?" said Alice.

"Yes, Alice, the worst of all wars,—father against son, and son against father ; the daughter against her mother, and the mother against her daughter. Alice, where will you be found ?" said Gifford, with affectionate earnest.

"With you for ever, my own dear father : who should I trust if not you, who have been my guide and companion ?" replied Alice.

"The Lord be praised !" said Gifford, deeply affected.

"Father," said Alice, "I have never doubted that you always did right. I was sorry to leave the Church, and mother was more grieved than I ; she says always, 'Your father knows best, Alice, and we must be guided by him.'"

"I have studied to know the will of the Lord," said Gifford, "not of the letter ; the letter killeth,

but the spirit giveth life. Your mother has been a good wife, Alice, and I would have taught her in the same way, but she has loved the old paths; I have prayed often for her, that she might know the Lord's will, and she will one day know it, Alice; she will be among the chosen vessels."

As they were approaching the house, Alice observed that they were deepening the moat, and that the walls had been very recently repaired in several places; her father smiled, and said, "Alice, you see we are repairing our breaches."

"Yes, father," replied Alice. Quietly and unostentatiously the Grange was strengthened, not only in external appearance, but by a supply of arms, which had been secretly conveyed into the upper rooms. The Parliament increased in boldness, and had given notice to their friends that they intended to try their strength against the Royalists. Gifford was therefore careful not to allow any one to enter his gates without reason. Within a few days after this conversation with Alice, the drawbridge was raised, and only lowered when needed, and under his own directions; there were no more country rides; and Gifford spent much time in strengthening the house, and removing the hay as far as possible from any of the buildings; the outhouses which had fallen to decay were cut down, and some men who had come in from the town were employed to turn them into firewood. More than a dozen men had come in during the week, and taken their places among the farm-servants, as if they had been hired to do farm-work. Alice noticed that two of them always sat up at night, and her

mother soon suspected that they were there for other purposes than to repair the buildings. Gifford had said to her they would stay for a week or two, as the country was disturbed, and he was desirous of repairing the house and protecting his property. Alice did not ask any questions; she considered that her father had trusted her, and that when it was necessary he would explain what was really going on. In the mean time, the servants constantly brought in rumours that the country was disturbed, and that there was going to be a battle between the King and the Parliament.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY one morning, as Alice was walking round the walls, she saw in the distance a party of horsemen riding towards the Grange; she looked again, not to be deceived by her imagination, for she had been thinking what she should do if her father really became a soldier: and she saw that they were advancing rapidly; running quickly to the house, she could scarcely say, "Father, father, the men are coming," when she fainted at his feet.

"Alice, my child! Alice!" said her mother: but she did not answer.

Gifford raised her in his arms, and said, "She has fainted, mother; but I must leave her with you." He ran from the house, and having given a sign to the men, hastened to the tower, and saw that a troop of horse, strongly armed, were close to the drawbridge;

they appeared to be of the Parliamentary party. But Gifford would not trust to appearances; and as he came on the battlements, he asked for what purpose they came.

A young man rode forward from the rear, and saying, "For God and the right," raised a letter, and extended it towards Gifford.

"If you come in peace," said Gifford, "give your letter to me." And going to the lower loophole, he took the letter, which announced that Captain Lisle, with a troop of thirty horse, was to hold Batcombe Grange for the Parliament, and that they would pay for all supplies furnished him; that they had reason to believe an attempt would be made on the Grange; and as they knew it was an important rallying-point for their friends, they hoped Lisle would arrive in time to hold it against the King's party. "Enter," said Gifford to Lisle, "and welcome;" and the party rode quickly through the gateway. "I must leave you for a moment," said Gifford, "for your arrival alarmed my daughter, who knew enough to be anxious for her father's safety."

"And I will attend to my troop," said Lisle, "until you come."

When Gifford returned to the house, he found Alice quite recovered, and rather ashamed of her fright; and Mary inclined to be fretful at his apparent carelessness of her daughter, and by no means pleased with her visitors, who, she said, would eat them out of house and home. Alice promised to behave better in future, and begged to be allowed to see the troop, which was drawn up in close order in the court.

Gifford took his daughter by the arm, and then went to inspect his little garrison. He was pleased with the men; they were all of them stoutly framed, and serious men, who had entered on the contest for something more than a soldier's pay; they wore no uniform, their arms were chiefly rifles and swords, which they had purchased according to their fancy; they were well supplied with ammunition, and had been sent in the expectation of seeing service on the road. Both Gifford and Alice were struck by Lisle's appearance; he was young, almost boyish looking, but his face was expressive, and his dark eye flashed as he spoke, or when he arranged the troop: he was carefully but plainly dressed, and his arms were the very best of their kind.

"Your servant," said Lisle, addressing Alice; "we have come to be your father's guests, if it be his pleasure."

"And you are very welcome," said Gifford; "my daughter thought that you had come to carry me away, and it had alarmed her quite beyond propriety, for she is now a soldier's daughter."

Alice smiled, and said, "Not a soldier yet, father."

"Yes," said Captain Lisle, "for here is your commission to hold the rank of Captain and to raise forces for the Parliament. But you are very careful; I expected to find no preparation for defence: we had information that the place was to be attacked, and your property applied to the use of the troops at Winchester, so I came away in haste, yet not unprepared."

"I have had suspicions for some weeks past," said

Gifford, "and have got a few good men to help me in case of a surprise: we have had a regular watch to patrol the walls day and night; they have certainly tried the most twice during the week, for the watch heard them, and I suspect that my neighbours have been very busy with my affairs lately."

"No doubt," said Lisle; "but if you could hold the place with your own men, we could now resist any attempt: they were no doubt induced by the hopes of plundering the farm."

"And yet," said Gifford, "they did not get all they bought at my sale safely to their houses. Colonel Trevor bought my sheep, more than half found their way back again, and my neighbours cooked some, so that the Colonel has made one bad bargain at the Grange already."

"Did they sell your stock for the ship-money?" asked Lisle.

"Yea," said Gifford, "and ruined their cause about here: I do not think that I should have been quite so active, had I not been stirred up. But dismiss your troop, and when they have found their quarters they shall have some food, and we can discourse at our leisure."

The men were dismissed to quarters, and evidenced the good discipline they were under by the quickness of their movements; the horses were well groomed, then fed, and the whole party assembled in the hall, where every means was used to accommodate them; some sat on stools, others on barrels, and although there was mirth, there were no oaths or rude jests. Gifford said a long grace and prayer before they

partook of their meal ; and when joint after joint had disappeared, and Mary Gifford wondered if they would ever cease eating, grace after meat was said, and the men again dispersed, leaving only their rifles and shot-bags in the hall. The two Captains then conferred together, and it was resolved to go out the next day for exercise, and to buy a quantity of flour in the event of a siege. Men were to be enlisted, and while securing the Grange, they were to aid the cause by a regular supply of troops from the country round. "Colonel Trevor will not find us sleeping," said Lisle ; "he knows long before this of my arrival here, and he will certainly lose no time in attacking us ; he is an active officer, but, we have heard, has no very effective troops under his command."

"A good commander will do much mischief with very inferior troops," said Gifford : "we must not leave the Grange without protection. I will make you commander while we are absent, Alice ; and mind that no one is admitted on any pretence. All our men shall be under arms ; and your troop, Captain Lisle, shall ride through the village ; it will strengthen our party : and I think we may defy the Colonel now."

With the early dawn the troop was drawn up in the court, and after prayers, and a hymn sung by the whole troop, they left the court-yard, Gifford himself staying for a short time to see the men at their posts. They rode through the village, and were merrily greeted by many friends, who said, laughingly, that they had not seen Master Gifford for so long that he was quite a stranger. Supplies were ob-

tained without any trouble, and Lisle paid for all, as he had been provided with money for the purpose. As they were riding through the village, about an hour after they had left the Grange, they saw Colonel Trevor's waggon on the road. "It is too early to plunder the enemy," said Lisle, "or we ought to carry off his team."

"Yes," said Gifford, "I wish to have a conscience void of offence, and I will not be the first to attack the King's party; we have drawn the sword for the truth's sake, and to defend our country from French gold, and French armies, and the popish religion, and we will not dishonour our cause by plunder."

"I did but jest," said Lisle; "I would not allow a man of mine to plunder, and they are most of them too strict to think of it."

The purchases of corn and flour being made, waggons were very speedily pressed into the service to carry them to the Grange: every care was taken to avoid a surprise; a strong patrol rode in advance, under Lisle, and Gifford brought up the rear. As they cleared the village, Lisle saw two troopers riding in haste, but he thought it better not to attempt to overtake them; the march was quickened, the guns were kept ready to be discharged at a moment's notice, and the Captains kept a sharp look-out; the march was unmolested, and by midday the whole party were safe within the walls.

When Alice saw her father she ran to meet him, and said, "You have tried to play me a trick, father, to see if I would obey you."

"What do you mean, Alice?" said Gifford.

"Only that a man came here about an hour ago with a load of hay, and said that you had ordered it to be brought here, and that he was to wait until you returned, to be paid for it."

"And what did you do?" said Captain Lisle.

"I obeyed orders, Sir," said Alice.

"And it is well that you did, Alice," said Gifford.

"Yes, indeed, it is," said Lisle, "or we might have been ruined."

"I did not suspect anything wrong," said Alice; "the carter looked a simple fellow, and begged hard to come in, because his horses were tired."

"And what did you say?"

"I said no one could come in; and the man on guard said, 'No one, for he would shoot any man who tried to pass him.' And after waiting about ten minutes, the carter said, 'I may as well go;' and I said, 'Yes, you may, for if your horses were dying, I would not let you enter this gate.'"

"Bravely done, Mistress Alice," said Lisle.

"Well done, sentry," said Gifford.

"But what could the man have done," said Alice, "even if I had let him in?"

"I will tell you, Alice," replied her father, "and you will understand the value of strict obedience: I did not send the man, the waggon belonged to Colonel Trevor; suppose under that hay there were a dozen armed men, and that they had rushed out and burned the house and all in it."

"But, father," said Alice, "the driver had a slouched hat, and he looked almost silly, and talked as if he were not quite right."

"It is fortunate for us that he did not impose upon you," said Lisle; "I am certain that it was either a ruse to overturn the wagon in the gate and thus give them time to attack us, or that they intended to surprise the house."

"And who could the carter be?" said Alice.

"Not unlikely Colonel Trevor, or if not, one of his officers," said her father. The men talked to each other of the escape from the Colonel's snares, and it was resolved to double the guard at night, and that while Lisle took the first watch, Gifford should be ready for the morning watch, when it was probable something would be attempted.

As the evening drew on, additional precautions were taken: the waggons were unloaded, and the horses placed under shelter; the carts and waggons were drawn up so as to afford cover, if the walls should be forced or surprised; the dogs were, as usual, in the basement of the towers, and nothing was omitted to secure them against surprise or a hostile attack.

When the arms were served out for the night, Lisle suggested that all the knives should be ground sharp, to be used as dirks for close combat. When all this had been done, supper was served, and a plentiful repast prepared the troop for all that might happen.

Gifford, however, thought it imperative on them to acknowledge their deliverance from the wiles of the enemy: he offered up prayers for their protection, and thanksgivings for the mercy granted to them. "They were," he said, "as brands plucked from the and spared by the mercy of God."

There was a striking contrast between the language of these men and their appearance. They were armed for war, yet they spoke only of mercy and of the love of God to sinners ; they were in arms against their king, but, as they said, because they served the King of kings.

When every precaution had been taken, Gifford retired to rest, not, however, before he had offered up prayers for the protection of all in his house. Lisle immediately went on his watch, and performed well the duties of a good captain. He was originally intended for the practice of the law, and had been admitted at Lincoln's Inn ; when the Parliament resolved to take up the sword, he determined to cast in his lot with them. Descended from a respectable family of the middle class, he had entered zealously into all the disputes between the King and the Parliament. Bred a Presbyterian, he saw Popery in any form of religion, and he hated the Church of England as a bad and dull imitation of the Church of Rome ; he therefore desired not only to control, but to subvert the Church, and abolish the office of bishops ; he laughed to utter scorn the pretension then being made to apostolical succession, and said that there could never be any but a spiritual succession. He was equally consistent in his views of civil government, and an ardent republican ; he was open in his admiration of the ancient republics, and an ardent asserter of man's natural right to freedom. When warned by his friends of the danger he incurred, he said that his poverty was his greatest protection, he had nothing to pay the expenses of confiscation ; he was an orphan,

and had no parents to grieve for him. An uncle, who had brought him up, sympathised with and advanced his views, but did not risk his life or property by any outward acts of approval. He hinted, that in stirring times the adventurous often rose to the top of the troubled waters, and Lisle became known to many in Parliament as a daring young man ready for work. He was advised to enlist himself in the train-bands, that he might acquire a knowledge of military discipline; and from the moment he received the hint he resolved to learn the military art, as he had formerly studied the law.

On the breaking out of the civil war Lisle received a captain's commission, and no one among the young officers had a greater share of popularity than he enjoyed. He constantly drilled his troop, and incited them to improve themselves in the use of arms; shewed them how a good sword and a well-trained horse would often give the smaller force the advantage over large numbers. Although deeply imbued with the religious prejudices of the day, he did not at first address his own men, but appointed chaplains, who excited them against the royal party. They described the royalists as the enemies of God; men without hope in this world, and without fear of another. It was under the constant excitement of military exercise or prayer that Lisle kept his troop in such excellent order as to excite the notice of the Parliamentary leaders, who sent him on a separate command, with orders to protect the Grange.

Colonel Trevor, an active royalist, had expressed a wish to seize and plunder Gifford's house, for it

assumed an importance from its nearness to Winchester, and from the power that it gave the Parliament of raising recruits, as well as from the owner's character. The result proved that they did not mistake the importance of the post, and that the information which the Parliament had obtained of Colonel Trevor's intentions was correct. Recruits had been enlisted without trouble, many of the younger sons of the yeomen were privates in Gifford's troop, and after Lisle's arrival the Grange was speedily filled with young and active soldiers.

The night passed without any attempt at a surprise, and several weeks rolled away quietly, until it was thought that Colonel Trevor either had no design against the place, or that he had abandoned it as impracticable. Lisle, however, exercised his troop daily, and kept up intercourse with the village of Batcombe. All the information that could be obtained was that Colonel Trevor was very actively organizing a large force, that they seldom left the park, and no one knew their number.

CHAPTER IV.

It happened with both parties, as it often does in war, that they miscalculated each other's intentions. The Colonel intended to seize the Grange, and had sent an officer disguised as a carter, and a waggon full of men covered with hay, with instructions to seize the house, if they failed, to overturn the waggon on the bridge, and then to send a man on

horseback to apprise the troop, when he would cut off the party from the village, burn the house, and, if possible, capture the entire force. The prudence of Alice had foiled his scheme, and here only remained the chance of a night attack—always dangerous with undisciplined troops—or to try a display of his whole force, which might intimidate the garrison to surrender. It was resolved to attack them if there appeared a prospect of success; the Colonel had heard a report, confirmed by one of his own men, that most of the garrison had been withdrawn to London; the fact being that Lisle had sent twenty men to London to be drilled for the Earl of Essex's army, the Grange having become over-crowded.

It was three o'clock on Sunday morning—for the Colonel said the better day the better deed—when the bugle sounded in Trevor Park, and shortly after the officers and men were at their posts. The Colonel had already been up an hour, and despatched four waggons along the road to the Grange, with instructions to the men to stop at the cross-roads, and wait the arrival of the troop. Having paraded his men, the Colonel said, that although they were going against an undisciplined enemy, who had raised their hands against the King, they were to use no unnecessary violence; that success was certain, as the house was very weakly defended, and the officers were only civilians.

The command was given to march, and ere long ne upon the waggons at the cross-roads; these tily despatched, and the troop moved on within half-a-mile of the Grange, and were

halted behind a plantation of trees, which screened them entirely from view. The heavy morning mists, which had hitherto concealed them, gradually rose, and the Colonel was therefore compelled to hide his troops, while with his staff he reconnoitred the position. He rode along the road, and found that every tree or hedge that afforded shelter had been removed; that unless it was possible to intimidate, they could only hope to carry the place by a regular siege, and for this, cannon was wanting. Sending one of his staff to bring forward the waggons, he rode deliberately round the house within range of their guns. Gifford's orders were strict, that no shot should be fired until the enemy attacked them or attempted to take up a position. Not a movement could be heard, and the only sound that disturbed the quiet of the early morning was the loud baying of the watch-dogs.

"They sleep well," said the Colonel; "or have they abandoned the place, think ye?"

"No, Colonel, they are wide enough awake," said one of the staff.

Again riding carefully round, he selected what appeared to be a weak portion of the wall, and directed them to try the moat; it was deep and inaccessible. He resolved, therefore, to display his force, and summon the place; the waggons were approaching, and after an hour's delay the whole troop arrived just out of range. The Colonel rode forward to the gate, and the bugler had scarcely ended his blast when Gifford stood alone on the tower, and said,—

"Good morning, Colonel Trevor; to what circumstance am I indebted for this early visit, and for this array?"

"You are accused, Joseph Gifford, of harbouring the King's enemies, of enlisting recruits to make war against the royal authority, and of harbouring one John Lisle, a traitor."

"I have authority for all that I do, Colonel Trevor."

"What authority?" asked the Colonel.

"The authority of the Commons in Parliament assembled," replied Gifford.

"Confound them and their authority!" said the Colonel; "unless you surrender Lisle, allow me to search your house, and take away all arms found there, and forthwith give up your present desperate cause, I shall burn your house, and send you a prisoner to Winchester Castle."

"And I tell you, Colonel, that I will never give up John Lisle, that I will not allow you or any man to search my house," replied Gifford.

"And is this the only answer you have to give to a gentleman holding the King's commission?"

"It is too late to talk to me of the King's commission," said Gifford; "I have had my property seized and wasted in that name."

"And this is the end of your praying, you round-headed, psalm-smiting villain!" said the Colonel.

"Colonel, let us have no blasphemy," said Gifford.

"Blasphemy, you canting, snivelling fellow! God-fearing men you call yourselves, and dare to attack the King! the devil take you all!"

Lisle, who had been listening impatiently, at this

moment came upon the wall, and said, "You want me, Colonel Trevor, I hear."

"I want John Lisle, the traitor, if you are that man," said the Colonel.

"I am John Lisle, but not a traitor, Colonel Trevor; and unless you can be more civil I may visit Trevor Park, and burn your house about your ears. Listen, Colonel Trevor,—Fire one shot here, and I will fire twenty against your house."

"Hah! hah! hah! well boasted, young traitor! I will teach you the slack-rope dance, and play you a pretty tune to another world: you shall have the rogue's march, unless you want one of your deadly-lively hymns,—Zion's Comfort, Bethesda's Grunt, or Salem's Howl," said the Colonel.

"You are a profane old villain," said Lisle.

Gifford gently reminded him that the conference was useless, that it was no time to talk, and bowing to the Colonel, Gifford with Lisle left the tower.

The men were all ready at their posts, and having left only sufficient to watch the movements of the enemy, they came into the court, where Gifford offered up a prayer for their deliverance from the enemy, and from the guilt of shedding blood; it being ended, Lisle gave out the verse of a hymn, and after one long note it seemed as if from every corner of the house voices were singing :—

"God watches o'er the dwellings of the just,
And in their cause doth His great power employ;
His name we praise, in Him alone we trust,
He is our rock and source of every joy."

The verse was scarcely ended when the bugles

again rang out their merry note ; the Colonel did not like the singing :—“The rascals will hold out,” he said ; “I must stop the psalm-smiting,” and arraying his whole force, he awaited Gifford’s appearance. He was almost immediately on the tower.

“Gifford,” said the Colonel, “I have no wish to attack your house ; you may see that I do not lack men ; surrender Lisle, let your other guests depart, and your liberty shall be respected.”

“I cannot give up a man who has taken shelter under my roof. Put the question to yourself, Colonel Trevor ; suppose that I came with my party and demanded one of your friends, intending to hang him on the first tree I found, would you give him up ?”

“No,” said the Colonel, “but Lisle is a traitor—a clever traitor, who has seduced thousands to their ruin ; and he will bring ruin on your house, if you harbour him.”

“If I saw the ruin before me I would embrace it rather than violate the laws of hospitality,” answered Gifford.

“A noble fellow,” said one of the officers, who stood by the Colonel.

“Then our parley is at an end,” said the Colonel ; “and you must take all the consequences of your treason.”

Gifford made no reply, but as the waggons were forming under the range of their fire, and were intended for hostile purposes, he again turned back, and calling to the Colonel, reminded him that a nearer approach would cause them to fire.

The Colonel laughed scornfully, and as the troop had

halted just out of range, the waggons were moved closer to the wall, and some of the best shots having dismounted, were placed behind them.—A single shot from the Grange, and the leading horse fell dead.

“A good shot for the first,” said the Colonel; “the villains have used their rifles before to-day.”

Another shot, and another of the horses was wounded; the Colonel ordered the men to fire at the loop-holes, but every man had been withdrawn under cover, and the Colonel was obliged to try other devices. He dismounted part of the troop, and having spent the day in bringing up planks and waggons from the village, he resolved to assault the place in the evening. All the villagers were pressed to bring in carts and waggons; trees were cut down from Gifford’s plantation, and in the dusk of the evening the waggons moved on two different points, while a large party advanced to cross the ditch. The garrison had been under arms all day, and the food was taken to them, that they might be ready for the attack. When they knew that the enemy were advancing there was a slight impatience, but the orders were to reserve their fire until the command was given. Lisle, who first fired, shot with deadly aim, and although the Colonel exposed himself, and bravely urged on his men, in a few minutes he found thirty of them either killed or wounded. It became evident that the house could only be taken by regular approaches, and a siege. He drew off his men, and raising a white flag, demanded permission to remove the wounded. Gifford readily acceded to his request, and offered the use of horses to draw them to the vil-

lage ; the Colonel was too deeply mortified at his defeat to do more than courteously decline the offer.

The evening had closed on them, the stars were just rising, and the chill air increased the sufferings of the wounded. By slow degrees they were collected and placed in waggons, and the horses they had ridden were used for their removal. It was a very different spectacle from that in the morning ; then all was life and hope, now one waggon bore seven dead bodies, and the other twenty were more or less wounded. The Colonel endeavoured to cheer his men with the hopes of revenge, and that they would one day meet in a fair field.

Immediately after the enemy had departed Gifford offered a solemn thanksgiving for their deliverance ; only two of their number had been slightly wounded. He acknowledged the hand of God that protected them from so many dangers.

In the morning the drawbridge was lowered, and Mary went with Alice to offer any assistance to the wounded men who had been left at the village. Some abused them as the cause of all their troubles, but the greater part were thankful, and received the little comforts which they brought with gratitude. It was a fearful sight to those who had been unused to see men lying in hopeless suffering. Alice read to some of them, and endeavoured to teach them of a better life ; her gentle voice won its way to their hearts, and one or two expressed regret at the reckless lives they had led ; but with the many there was only thankfulness for relief from bodily pain, that which Alice had been taught to consider the one thing needful they knew

not of. After a long day's work, and many messages for bandages and other necessaries, Mary returned home with her daughter. Mr. Wentworth had been to see the wounded men, and although he spoke kindly, he was grave and reserved ; it was dangerous to be civil to suspected persons even when on an errand of mercy, and Mr. Wentworth was eminently prudent in seeking to avoid offence to the authorities. He, with many others, did not foresee any chance of change in their rulers, or he would have trimmed his sails in time.

When John Gifford heard of the sufferings of the wounded, he was affected even to tears, and said he deeply regretted that the Colonel had forced them to take away life :—“God is my witness that I spared them long, even to the risk of our lives.”

“I could have killed the old Colonel, and but for your command I would have done so,” said Lisle.

“He is a brave old fellow,” said Gifford, “but a blasphemer; he has now time to repent.”

“He will only repent of one thing,” said Lisle ; “that I am not hanging in his park.”

“Or perhaps that I am not on my way to Winchester, and the Grange on fire,” said Gifford.

“It was the moat that stopped them,” replied Lisle ; “the Colonel would have forced the walls with his numbers if he could have reached them, but the men fired admirably ; and how well Carlyon did, I am sure he did not fire a shot in waste.”

“All have done their duty,” said Gifford ; “a very painful duty it has been to me, for we have taken up the sword, and who knows when we may lay it down.”

ALICE LISLE :

"I hope never to lay down my sword until we have conquered," said Lisle; "it is for freedom that we fight, and I am ready to die at any moment, but not to live a slave; I shall live to see the Popish mass swept out of the land, and Prelatists in the dust, and then the Lord will build up Zion."

"You speak as a young man, Lisle; I am not so hopeful," said Gifford; "I do not regret any personal sacrifices, but the cost of life and of happiness to many I dare not contemplate."

"But I can," said Lisle; "the heart of England is with us; I seek to free the Gospel from a bondage more cruel than that of Israel to Moab and Amalek: the Lord of hosts is our refuge, and He will be a strong tower against our enemies."

"But," said Gifford, "we shall have to answer for many a brave life ended ere we conquer."

"Be it so," said Lisle, "and let those answer who provoke this contest; but," he continued, "I must say to you, Gifford, that I shall shortly leave you; you can now defend your post without my assistance, and you will not have another attack for some time, unless they are able to besiege you; I propose, therefore, as soon as the recruits are better drilled, to take about fifty men to London, or if not, to the North."

"Have we not enough fighting here?" said Gifford.

"Yes," replied Lisle, "but we seem rather to attract the enemy, and if we depart you may perhaps hold your own in peace, especially if we can occupy the Colonel."

"He is a brave old fellow, and will catch me some day if he can," replied Gifford.

"Unless I am beforehand with him ; for I do not think that he will let us go in peace, especially as he will be mortified with our success," replied Lisle.

During the next fortnight drilling proceeded rapidly at the Grange, and the number of recruits again inconveniently crowded the house, so that preparations were made for the departure of the troop for London. The women spent their evenings in making forage bags, the men sharpened their swords, some rifles were exchanged, and the troop were ready for active service, either on the road or on their arrival in town. Lisle thought that his departure might be kept secret, and that thus he might prevent Colonel Trevor attacking him on the road, but an occasional deserter carried information to the Park, and the Colonel knew that a movement would shortly be made. He therefore refrained from any hostile demonstration near the Grange, but kept the roads well watched, and his men in constant readiness. He knew that the whole force within the house did not out-number his own, and he rightly expected that only recruits would be sent away.

Lisle was, however, in no great hurry to depart, and delayed his journey from day to day, expecting more direct orders as to his movements ; at last a day was fixed upon, and a letter duly received by Lisle appointing the day following the receipt of his orders for his departure ; the route was left to his own discretion.

His stay at the Grange had, however, affected another even more strongly than himself ; and, with all proper reserve, Alice could not conceal from her-

self that the departure of Lisle would leave a great blank in their circle. At every leisure moment he had read to or with her, and he found Alice already predisposed, by the admonition of her father, to listen to his own views of religion.

She had a keen relish for the beauties of nature, and for a country life, and to Lisle it appeared like another happy boyhood returning to him again. Alice did not venture to ask Lisle's future plans, but she listened with great pleasure to his promise that if all went well with him, he would come and visit the Grange when war was over.

"A long and dreary winter, I fear," said Alice, "to the summer of our hopes."

"Not so," replied Lisle; "our party are now perhaps at their very lowest, but I have confidence in Cromwell; he is a man of determination, and evidently gaining an ascendant. He will use every means and all means to promote our cause."

"But God gives the victory," said Alice.

"Yes, victory or death, Alice; and without victory death will be welcome."

Alice shuddered; she had seen the end of one fight, and prayed earnestly for peace.

"Do not shudder, Alice," said Lisle; "I have confidence in our success. Many of the greatest men in the country are with us, and we shall raise England to such greatness that men will respect the name of Englishman and fear to oppress him."

"God grant a good end to these troubles," said Alice, and they parted.

CHAPTER V.

COLONEL Trevor was fertile in expedients, and he had never ceased to regret his repulse from the Grange and the losses which he had sustained. Among the killed was Cranford, his nearest neighbour, and six of his tenants had been severely wounded. He promised his disheartened troops a sure revenge, and a fair field, where they could meet the enemy face to face. One of his spies had intercepted the carrier with the letter to Lisle, and Colonel Trevor succeeded by giving a large bribe in obtaining information of the appointed day for the departure of the troops, and having resealed the letter, he sent the man on his way. This was what he wanted to know, but then what road would Lisle take? He might take the direct road, but it was commanded for a long distance by high banks, and allowed of little room for cavalry to escape an ambush. He therefore rightly conjectured that Lisle would make a detour, and strike into the main road about five miles from Batcombe. Acting on this idea, he occupied two woody banks at short intervals with a strong body of men on foot, armed with rifles, while he prepared an ambush to attack the retreating troop if they should fall into disorder.

It was a beautiful summer morning; the air was laden with the perfume of flowers; and the Colonel augured well from the heartiness of his men, and their alacrity in carrying out his plans. He posted the men in the woods, and placed the ambush at a short distance from the road, screened by a slight elevation

of land; and then having made his arrangements, he occupied the main road with a body of light horsemen, which he commanded in person. The spot which had been selected was in favour of the advancing party, if they stood firm, as the descent was gradual, and the road good; but the Colonel calculated that, once shaken by the fire of the men in the copse, they would fall either into the hands of his ambush if they retreated, or into his own hands if, in despair, they attempted to cut their way through.

Lisle's dispositions were made under the impression that his journey was concealed from every one but Gifford and himself; they were not, however, the less carefully made. He inspected the arms before his departure, separated his troop into detachments ready to support each other, and yet at sufficient distance to be enabled to manœuvre in the event of an attack. As the men rode out of the gate Lisle looked at them with pride, and Gifford pronounced them to be first-rate soldiers.

There were many last words to be spoken. Gifford parted from his friend, for such he had become, with sorrow, and Alice, having tried to dry her tears, ran to the tower and waved her handkerchief to Lisle as he rode out of the gate: then having drawn up his troop he moved to the front, and putting Carlyon in the rear, he started on his journey; the horses had been well fed and groomed, and it was nine of the clock before the last of the troop left the gate.

The orders were to walk the horses gently, to keep a good look-out, and to have the arms ready for immediate use.. Lisle was constantly in the advance,

and as they entered the copse, he had said, that if the Colonel knew their road and their day of departure, it would be a nice place for an ambush, when a ball whistled by his ear. Lisle coolly ordered his men to wheel about, when another ball struck a tree close to him, and a rapid discharge of musketry convinced him that the road was lined; for a moment there was a slight panic, but Carlyon had halted his men, and they all rallied in the open ground, when Lisle encouraged them by a smile and a jest on the Colonel's clever ruse. He had hardly got his troop into order when the Colonel's party were in view; for hearing the musketry, he thought that Lisle had fallen into the snare, and, furious at his escape, he charged, thinking that he would easily rout them after the alarm.

In an instant every sword was unsheathed, and the war-cry raised for "God and the right," as they rushed on the approaching troops with the utmost speed: the ground was slightly in favour of Lisle, and he rode at the head of his troop, determined, if possible, to break up the opposing squadron, but not to pursue. Onward rushed the troops, each side animated by its leader, and eager for victory: the shock was tremendous; horse and rider were borne to the ground, and with a blow Lisle clave the Colonel to his saddle. The struggle was not long, but it was desperate; the King's party behaved with determination, and when unhorsed, fought on foot, or shot at their adversaries as they lay on the ground. Lisle was sabred in his left arm, and a musket-ball struck his boot. He encouraged his men, and appeared to bear a charmed life, as he rushed into the thick of the fight. Car-

lyon ably seconded him, and removed the wounded to the rear, so that they appeared to suffer few losses, for every man's place was quickly supplied.

At the moment when victory seemed to declare in favour of Lisle, Carlyon saw a detachment preparing to charge the rear; he immediately faced about, and fell upon them before they could form the charge. Having routed them, he returned again, fearful of weakening the main body; and on his return, he met Lisle, who announced the defeat of the Colonel and the retreat of his troops.

It was resolved not to attempt any pursuit, as it was supposed that the royal forces were numerous in the neighbourhood, and they had obtained a victory with only a few wounded, and three of their number killed; of the Colonel's troops, sixteen lay dead on the field, twenty were wounded and unable to escape, and many of the wounded had ridden away early in the fight.

Lisle's wounds caused him much pain, so that having seen his own wounded collected, he placed them in carts which had been detained by the Colonel, to prevent a knowledge of his movements, and leaving his horse to one of the troop, he was laid in a cart that he might be more at ease.

There was no difficulty in discovering the poor Colonel; he lay where he fell, his sword still grasped firmly in his hand, and Carlyon desired that his sword should be sent with the body, under an escort, to the Park. "He died as a brave soldier, and he shall leave
the sword in his hand," said the soldiers.
of victory were many and varied; arms

of various kinds were strewn along the road, and several horses became booty to the parliamentary troops, who were greatly rejoiced at their victory, and confident in their leader. Some who were slightly wounded shewed their scars with evident satisfaction; others told of their narrow escapes; and although their journey was delayed, they were not sorry to return to good quarters, and to vaunt their prowess to the older soldiers.

The King's party did not draw rein until they had left Lunnons-lane many miles behind them, and when they halted it was to shew how completely their troop had been routed, and how few had escaped without injury; they could scarcely speak of the terrible charge without a shudder: horses and men ridden down, as if overwhelmed by an avalanche; sabres hewing men asunder at a stroke; "God and the right" shouted fiercely by the one side, and answered bravely by "God and the King" on the other. Some told the story in one way, some in another. All agreed that their Colonel was killed, that the royal troops were routed, and that they had done their duty as brave men, and many shewed wounds as a proof that they had been in the thickest of the fight.

Lisle took care that the wounded should not be moved too rapidly, and as he again led the advance in a light cart, he caused water to be given to the men, and compelled the drivers of the waggons to pay them every attention. The day was, fortunately, cool, so that none of them suffered so severely as they otherwise would have done. Carlyon, who now assumed the command under Lisle's direction, halted several

times at the cross roads, fearing a surprise, if any other troops should be on the way, and the party they had routed only a part of the army ; but no further traces were seen of any troops, and they continued their journey back to the Grange. Mary and Alice were occupied with the household duties, and talking to each other of their diminished numbers and of the comparative quietness they would live in, as they had lost the company of Lisle, when one of the men came in and said that Captain Gifford, for so he was now called, had seen a troop of horse and some waggons moving slowly in the distance, and that another attack might be apprehended : the men were soon in arms ; Gifford did not dare to mention his suspicions, which were, that the troop had been surprised or routed, and that Colonel Trevor was about regularly to besiege his home. He was grave, as usual, went round the walls, placed the men in good positions, and then, going back, he saw that the troop, nearly at the gate, were headed by Carlyon, who had ridden rapidly in advance. As soon as he saw Captain Gifford, he said, " We have beaten them, Captain, and killed the old Colonel."

" Who ? who ?" said Gifford. " Where is your Captain ?"

" We have beaten the King's troop ; Captain Lisle is wounded, but not seriously ; he is coming in one of the carts, and bringing the wounded with him ; the rear-guard will bring in the arms and horses that we have taken."

" Come in, Carlyon, and take my place," said Captain Gifford ; " I will take your horse and ride to

meet Lisle; do not say that any harm has happened to him, but tell them to prepare beds for some wounded men."

Carlyon obeyed instantly, and dismounting his horse crossed the drawbridge, which had been let down. Gifford mounted, and was very soon up with the waggons.

Lisle smiled, and said, " You see that we are coming to take up our quarters with you again, and it may be for some time, I fear, as I am wounded, though not dangerously."

" How did all this happen ?" said Gifford; " I thought that no one knew of your departure."

" And so did I," said Lisle; " and if I knew who had betrayed us they should have all that martial law gave them. But the poor old Colonel will lay no more snares: he had lined the wood in Lunnons-lane, and but for an accidental shot, fired too soon, by a young hand, I suppose we should have been cut up, without a chance of saving a man; the road was occupied by horsemen, which the Colonel led, and he had placed an ambush to cut off our retreat."

" And how did you escape ?" enquired Gifford.

" I suspected that we were betrayed, when the first shot passed close by me, and instantly retreated; the dropping fire brought up the Colonel, and in a rage he charged at us. We had the advantage of ground; I had confidence in our men, and we fairly crushed them."

" And what is become of Colonel Trevor ?" asked Gifford.

" He fell at the head of his troop, and I have sent

his body with an escort to Trevor Park. He died like a brave soldier, and Carlyon thought he deserved to carry his sword with him from the field."

"Rightly done, Lisle. The Lord be praised for the victory; He has delivered His saints from the hands of their enemies."

"From great peril," said Lisle, "and from danger nobly met. Look how well the men bear themselves, Gifford; they have been almost as tender as women to the wounded."

"I will send a courier to London," said Gifford, "to inform the Parliament of your success and wounds. I have sent already to have beds for you, but I did not let Mary know that you were wounded, lest it should unfit her for her duties; she will need all her energies to look after you all."

"We are come to good quarters," said Lisle, "and shall soon be cured of our wounds."

They were now nearly arrived at the drawbridge, when Gifford rode on, and going immediately to the house, told his wife and Alice of the fight at Lunnons-lane, of Lisle's wounds, which he said were trifling, and of the necessity of their immediate attention to the wounded.

Alice would have gone out to meet them, but Gifford said,—“My child, this is your place, and you must not leave the house.” Alice lingered about the hall, and when she saw Lisle, could with difficulty restrain her emotion: she saw from his appearance that he was determined not to make the most of his wounds, and when he said that it was good fortune which had brought him back again, she wished him

safe in London. In a very short time he was in bed, where Gifford had bathed his wounds, and found that the contusion, though severe, was not dangerous, and the sabre-cut only a flesh-wound. He said it was well that they did not sharpen their swords at Trevor Park, or he might not have returned to the Grange.

"The Colonel never intended that we should leave Lunnon's-lane, but we disappointed him," said Lisle, "and his poor fellows are terribly cut up."

"They are all attended to," said Gifford; "but the Doctor is slow in coming, or they might have been all made comfortable."

The messenger whom Carlyon had sent was the bearer of a double commission; first, he was to see the Doctor and bring him, for which purpose he took a led horse; and secondly, he was to announce to the village of Batcombe the triumph of the Parliamentarian troops and the death of Colonel Trevor. He found ready listeners to his story, and when he reached the Doctor's house rumour had preceded him, and the Doctor resolutely refused to go to any crop-head Puritan.

"You are wanted," said the soldier, "to use your healing art upon some of your own ungodly ones, as well as on the Lord's people."

"And I shall not come to see any of you," said Dr. Harewood. "I know the Grange is a hornet's-nest of enemies."

"It is a blessed refuge for the Lord's people, and that saintly man, Gifford, has done a blessed work; it would be well, Doctor, if you thought more of the

word, and cared for the Lord's people and work," said the soldier.

"I have my own work to do, and must be off to Trevor Park to see how it fares with the Colonel," said Dr. Harewood.

"You are to come with me," said the soldier; "for the Colonel is past your help."

"What do you mean?" asked Dr. Harewood.

"He is dead," said the soldier.

"Dead?" said the Doctor, amazed.

"Yes! cloven in two by our Captain, and gone home like a brave soldier, with his sword, to Trevor Park."

"God's curse be on you all," said Dr. Harewood; "you have killed the bravest man in all this country."

"He was a brave man," said the soldier, "but there are others as brave; our Captain did not count numbers to-day;—but come—come with me."

"I will not come," said Dr. Harewood.

The soldier drew his large pistol, and said, "Your blood be on your own head: I am sent to bring you to the Grange, and alive or dead you shall go with me."

"You are,"—said Dr. Harewood.

"Not another word, Doctor; mount the horse at the gate and ride before me, or you will not bandy words with any man again."

Rising the Roundheads in his heart, and muttering to himself, Dr. Harewood took his instruments and set off Grange, looking right and left to see if there were means of escape, and then at his companion, drawing his pistol ostentatiously in his hand. The

Doctor had the mortification to hear the cheers of the villagers as the soldier passed along, and he found that the Parliamentary cause was more popular than he had thought it to be. On his arrival at the Grange he complained to Gifford of the soldier's rudeness, and after an enquiry into the cause, Gifford said "that in times of necessity men could not choose their words: he was bound to obey orders, and they were to bring you here at all hazards." Dr. Harewood was taken first to the Colonel's soldiers, some of whom he had seen before at Trevor Park; he found ample occupation in dressing their severe wounds, and directing the men who helped him to bandage the broken limbs. When he saw Lisle he said that in a few days he would be well again, but that the other wounded men required constant attention. On taking his departure, Gifford expressed a hope that he would come again, and having liberally rewarded him for his trouble, sent him home with an escort to bring up some necessary comforts from the village.

Gifford's despatch to the Parliament enclosed a letter from Lisle, who, concealing his own bravery, recommended Carlyon to their notice, for so bravely maintaining his position and defeating the Colonel's ambush; and only a few days passed before the thanks of Parliament were again conveyed to the Captains for their zeal, and Carlyon was appointed to lead the new levies.

Gifford did not think it safe to be idle, he therefore sent out spies into the country round, and exercised the men at their arms; the watch was kept up nightly, and Carlyon took Lisle's duties until his re-

covery ; a little work was able to be done in the fields, and the horses, under a guard, were turned out to graze.

There did not appear any probability of another attack ; the prisoners said that the first attack on the Grange had greatly disheartened the Colonel's troops, and it was only on account of their confidence in surprising Lisle that they could be induced to go out again—they were promised a fair field, and an easy victory.

The Parliamentary troops had consumed all the provisions at the Grange, and, except the cows kept for a supply of milk, there was nothing left for an enemy to plunder ; Gifford therefore sent away his little plate and linen to his friends, and as the wounded men improved and returned to their houses he prepared himself for any emergency ; the troops were plentifully supplied with provisions from the neighbouring country, and with exercises, and the occasional addition of a few recruits, the winter imperceptibly drew on.

CHAPTER VI.

THE wounded men improved rapidly under Dr. Harewood's care, and left the Grange grateful for the kind treatment of Gifford. Lisle had long been able to leave his room, and found a constant companion for his leisure in Alice ; he had to tell her again and again to fight in Lunnons-lane, and his men began to like his quarters well, so there would be no fighting for the remainder

of the year. Rumours reached them of the successes of the King's party, and Alice noticed Lisle's uneasiness whenever they were repeated to him. He said one day that there would be no peace so long as the King was alive.

Alice was greatly shocked, and said, "God forbid any one should be so wicked as to take the King's life; it is not for this that my father is fighting, or you either, I hope, Captain Lisle."

"We do not know for what we are fighting, except that it is for our laws and liberties, and certainly for our lives; for we have no safety but in victory."

"And the King?" said Alice.

"Yes, Alice, the King has broken the laws of this realm, and tried to coerce the Parliament; he has married a foreigner, and surrounded himself with Papists and half-popish advisers. We shall soon have no other law than the King's, if he can succeed in defeating the Parliament."

"But the King has always had great power in this country, and it is only of late that we have heard Parliament speak so boldly; they had not dared to speak above their breath to the great Queen Elizabeth."

"The Queen did well for her times, and destroyed the Armada, for which all true Protestants will reverence her memory; but she might not have found our day peaceful, for men have a truer sense of their own rights."

"And what rights have men?" asked Alice.

"An unalienable right to stand equally before the laws, to be tried by their peers, to pay no tax which is not sanctioned by Parliament," answered Lisle.

"Then you think my father did rightly when he refused the ship-money?"

"Yes," said Lisle; "I would never have paid it."

"Neither my mother nor I can understand this," said Alice; "a demand was made for a few shillings, which we could have paid without difficulty, and my father's refusal cost us the loss of our finest cattle, turned many of our oldest friends into enemies, and certainly quite changed my father."

"Not his religious views," said Lisle, "they were changed at his conversion."

"No, but his manners. He says little, but I know he hates the King's party. He used to pray for the King, now he speaks of the party as men of Belial—vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. He has long ceased to go to church, and now he speaks bitterly of the bishops."

"And have they done any good to the King?" said Lisle; "they have mixed up the spiritual with the temporal power, until they will both fall together; and it is a question which will fall first; but both must fall,—it is an unnatural alliance."

"I hardly know what to wish," said Alice; "my mother has from my childhood told me stories of the good Queen Bess; my father has never liked to hear them; but it seems very sad to think of the people in arms against their lawful King,—for the King has a right to his throne, no one can deny that,—Mr. Wentworth says a divine right."

"And is it not sad to think of a King in arms to deprive his people of their liberties and laws?" replied Lisle. "Has the King any right that I have not?"

has the Almighty made a different sun to shine on kings and beggars ? or does the King breathe a different air ? God has made all men alike."

" And some to rule and some to obey," said Alice.

" Yes, Alice, if you will have it so ; but I will never yield obedience to the arbitrary will of any man. I will die as I have hitherto lived, a free man, and die with my sword in my hand if it be God's will," said Lisle.

" And thus," said Alice, " you will misspend a life that might be usefully spent. You can have no right to depose a King, if you have the power. Had the nobles power or right to depose Richard the Second ?"

" Had they power or right to set up Henry the Seventh ?" asked Lisle.

" Power only," said Alice, " not right."

" Then there is another power rising now, Alice, and you will see that it will do as much, perhaps more, than ever the nobles did."

In these long conversations Alice gradually learned the extent of the plans of the Parliamentary party ; how completely they had shadowed out in their own minds the government they intended to erect on the ruins of the monarchy. Lisle was always attentive to her every wish, and never pressed his opinions offensively to her ; he entered into all her pursuits when not engaged in drilling the recruits, to whom he gave personal instruction, or reviewing his men. He was always ready to read with Alice ; they could not ride out together, for Lisle never left the gates unless he had a strong escort, knowing that he would be a good prize for any officer who would take him to Oxford.

The Parliament had already approved of Lisle's conduct, but they placed the Grange under the command of Gifford, and as nothing of importance would be decided on until the spring, he was directed to levy taxes as widely as possible, and to prevent any support being given to the King's troops who held Trevor Park. He was also advised, if possible, to disperse them, but as no one knew their numbers, it was left to his own discretion. Hints were also given him that the King's party had intelligence of what was passing at the Grange, and knew the exact number of troops engaged in its defence.

At first Lisle thought that the servants might be careless, and that the frequent intercourse between the village and the house had caused information to get abroad. He had never been able to satisfy himself who had given Colonel Trevor the information that ended in the fight at Lunnons-lane. Gifford said that he could not suspect any one in the house, and that the village, with a few exceptions, was entirely in their favour. It was resolved to disguise some of the cleverest of the officers, and to take a daily ride on the road towards Oxford and London to see if any communications were carried on, and Lisle volunteered to go in disguise to Trevor Park, and see if they were able to disperse the King's troops, and stop them from levying taxes under the royal authority. The roads were watched for several days, and Mr. Wentworth had been met by the men near the Grange, but only as if riding out for his pleasure. Gifford had suspected him or Dr. Harewood, as they were ardent royalists and clever men. When almost in despair, Carlyon, always zealous, and keenly alive to his

duty, met a man dressed as a Royalist riding towards Oxford. They saluted each other, and after talking of the fine bracing weather, Carlyon proposed to his neighbour that if he would wait for him on the road for a night he would journey with him. He had a nephew at Oxford, a poor scholar, whom he was wishful to see, and for whom he had a little money.

"I go to my uncle Speedwell's," said the courier, "who lives at the 'Bible and Crown'; my mother lieth sick there, having been sore affrighted by the Puritans, who plundered her house."

"They are canting rogues," said Carlyon. "Speedwell is a loyal man to King Charles, and you go to good quarters."

"Yes, Speedwell is no crop-eared knave, and if you have time to stay a few days at Oxford he will treat you well."

"Yes," said Carlyon, "I have no fears of his welcoming us when we arrive, and we shall, by travelling in company, escape the risk of meeting any of the rascals who are spreading over the country. Have you heard how they served our poor old Colonel Trevor at Lunnons-lane?"

The Royalist knew all about it, and trusted that the time was not far distant when the crop-ears would wish they had let that business alone.

"Did they do much damage?" asked Carlyon, carelessly.

"They almost destroyed Colonel Trevor's troop," said the courier, "but there are more men at Trevor Park now."

They rode along, now singing songs, and then

amusing themselves with bits of Puritan sermons. Carlyon answered every joke by another, and gave now and then a scrap of a sermon which sent his companion into roars of laughter. They had ridden almost twenty miles, when, on nearing an inn, Carlyon said that he must halt for the night, as he expected a friend to overtake him. The Royalist demurred; it was early, and they might put another five miles behind them; but Carlyon said that he could not disappoint his friend.

As they came up to the door, Carlyon said, "Here is the 'Golden Lion,' and a very dreadful looking beast he is to hang at any man's door."

"As ugly as a crop-eared Puritan," said the Royalist.

"A nice gallows to hang up a Puritan," said Carlyon; "the two beasts would hang side by side."

As they drew up the landlord came to the door, and the Royalist cried out, "Whew, wh-e-w, what have we here—Boniface turned saint?"

"I am one of the Lord's people," answered the landlord, gravely.

"One of the Lord's people!" said the Royalist: "come, let us ride on, comrade, or he will first cheat us and then invite us to prayer."

"I cannot go further," said Carlyon.—"Has any one asked for a traveller to-day? a traveller going to Oxford to see one Humbleworth, lodging with the King's saddler?"

"No, good master," said the landlord.

Carlyon expressed his disappointment, and calling his companion to dismount, they gave their horses

to the landlord, who led them away and told the ostler that two of the Lord's enemies were come to stay for the night. Carlyon tried to leave his companion, and to get a short interview with the landlord ; but his comrade was so pleased with his society, that he never left him, and after a stroll round the house, and many a rude joke, the supper was prepared. Carlyon ate heartily, and plied his companion well with wine ; they seemed to drink alike, but the Royalist was often persuaded to fill his glass twice, while his comrade, who ate voraciously, made excuses that he had not room for so much liquor. After a time the wine began to tell ; uncle Speedwell's purse became the subject of many a joke, and Carlyon promised his companion that he would drink a gallon of canary to his good health, and another to the confusion of the Roundheads.

“ Hah ! hah !” said the Royalist, “ I have something, comrade, that will make the Batcombe roundheads stare ; but they are poor stupid rogues.”

“ Batcombe fellows were always fools,” said Carlyon.

“ But they can fight,” said the Royalist ; “ the fellow that killed Colonel Trevor was no stripling ; he cut the old man in two, and if I had him here I would send my knife to his heart.”

“ And serve him right,” said Carlyon, “ if you could catch him.”

“ If I could,” said the Royalist ; “ that's not my business ; but when I get to Oxford there are those whose business it may be. Hah ! hah ! hah !”

The glass went rapidly across the table, and it was not easy to know who would have to give in. Carlyon

found that his companion could take his wine steadily, and he for a time doubted his ability to cope with him. He had plied him often with double glasses, and when they had emptied the can he proposed another to the honour of King Charles. The Royalist was getting noisy, and calling the landlord, he told him to bring another quart of his best canary to drink the King's health.

"More than enough for thy health, friend, hath been drunk here; go to thy rest, for thou art a profane man."

"Thou canting, crop-eared knave, dost thou talk to thy betters?" said the Royalist, and seizing a pistol he was about to fire, when the landlord rushed from the room, and Carlyon laid his hand on his arm, and begged him to be peaceable, as they might be betrayed to some of the Puritan soldiers, who were prowling over the country."

"I don't fear any crop-eared villains," said the Royalist.

"But," said Carlyon, "my nephew Humbleworth must not lose the little money I have for him."

The ostler came in with the wine, and the Royalist laughed heartily at his success in getting it. "I have muzzled the old fellow," said he; "now for a hymn," and shouting at the top of his voice, he sang, swore, and blasphemed, until the ostler thought him bereft of sense. The landlord trembled for his life, and dared not interfere with a drunkard, who, he said, feared neither God nor man. Carlyon saw that his time was coming; he pressed his comrade to drink, and at length, about midnight, he had the satisfaction

to see him, overcome with sleep, lay his head on the great oak table and snore.

Creeping quietly out of the room, Carlyon found the landlord, who, seeing him sober, upbraided him with the noise and violence of his comrade. It was no easy matter to convince the landlord that his appearance was assumed, and that he was really one of his own people. He took off his wig, and shewed his close-cut hair, but he was told that the Lord's people did not company with sinners ; and when at length Carlyon shewed his commission, he could only obtain a promise that he might take the ostler to help him in any enterprise, and that all the consequences must fall on his own head. Going to the stables, Carlyon found the man lying on a heap of straw, and it was not easy to rouse him ; he did not dare call loudly, for fear of arousing the household, so shaking him, and holding a light to his face, he made him understand that he was wanted. Once awake, he held before him two silver pieces, and told him that they should be his reward if he would help to tie up his comrade while he took some papers from his pockets. The ostler grinned, and promised to help, provided the man did not see his face ; and to prevent this Carlyon gave him a handkerchief to cover his head, and arranged for him to stand behind while he opened his coat and took out the documents he wanted. When told that this man was a Royalist courier with important papers, his scruples vanished, and smearing his face over with soot, he tied the handkerchief so as to hide his hair and to be pulled over his forehead ; then saddling Carlyon's horse, they went again to the parlour, and found the Royalist sleeping

heavily, as he had been left. Carlyon removed his pistols and gently drew his knife out of its sheath ; that done, the ostler began to bind him to the table. Sometimes he started and moved, as if uneasy, and sensible that there was some person about the room ; once or twice he muttered " Comrade, comrade," but, to Carlyon's satisfaction, he slept on. All was ready ; the lanthorn gave a glimmering light, and stood on the table close by the sleeping man ; the ostler was behind ready to raise him up, when Carlyon, advancing, began to unbutton his coat. He had slowly undone one, then another button, when the Royalist opened his eyes.

" What ho, comrade ! would you rob me ?"

He was dragged backwards, shouting " Villains, vill—" immediately a gag was thrust into his mouth, and after vain and fruitless struggles he was over-powered, and his papers taken from him ; he was then tightly pinioned and left. Carlyon glanced at the papers, he in a moment discovered that they were all he wanted, and taking horse, he left the inn-yard at a rapid pace, telling the ostler that there was another crown for their success, and to drink the Royalist's health ; the man received the additional reward, and promising to send the courier on the wrong track, he went again to his rest in the straw.

Carlyon rode all night, and when morning dawned was beyond reach of pursuit ; he had left the high road, and crossing bye-paths he found himself about mid-day before the gate of the Grange.

Early in the morning the landlord came down, and finding his guest still tied to the table, he removed

the gag, affected great concern, and expressed his wonder at the state in which he found him.

"Your house is a nest for robbers," shouted the Royalist; "I have been robbed, and nearly murdered last night, and you never came to help me when I called."

"I did not hear you call;—but where is your comrade?" said the landlord.

"He is a robber and a villain, and you harbour such," said the Royalist: "I will proclaim your character far and wide; I have been tied down, gagged, and robbed under your roof, and by more than one villain, or I would have sent him to another world."

"You came here with a companion, you drank and blasphemed together, and now that one of you is gone, and has robbed the other, you complain of an honest man, friend."

"I am no friend of yours," said the Royalist.

"No, nor your own; for when I warned you against the sin of drunkenness, it was nigh costing me my life," said the landlord; "I only gave you drink to save my life."

Rousing himself up, the Royalist sought the stable, and found the ostler grooming his horse, and apparently hard at work.

"Where is the fellow that came here with me last night?" said the Royalist; "he has robbed me. Which road did he take?"

"To Oxford," said the ostler. "He went off early this morning, and awoke me out of my sleep; he was a troublesome, mean fellow."

"Did he say where he was stopping?" asked

the Royalist, suspecting that the ostler was in league against him.

"Noa; he said his friend hadn't come, and his comrade was as drunk as a beast, and he would travel no more with such cattle, and he would—"

"A murderous villain," said the Royalist, "a thief and purse-cutter, to talk so of honest men!"

"He never paid me," said the ostler, "but told me that he would remember me next time he came this way."

"Does he often come?" enquired the Royalist.

"Oh! ah!" said the ostler, "I never see him afore, and I guess he ain't likely to come now if he's robbed you."

"Well, if you can let me light on him, you shall have a crown," said the Royalist; and comforting himself with the hope of a speedy revenge, he went into the inn upbraiding himself with his folly. It would be necessary to tell Mr. Wentworth that he had been robbed, and he passed the breakfast-time in inventing a story of being gagged and robbed on the road.

When he rose to depart, he cursed all Puritans and Roundheads, and with a wish that all might perish, he left the "Golden Lion," to the great comfort of the landlord, who said that he hoped the son of Belial would never darken his doors again.

CHAPTER VII.

THE short delay in Carlyon's arrival had been spent in much anxious debate between Gifford and Lisle; the former hoped that Carlyon was on some fortunate

track and following it up, as eventually proved to be true; the latter feared that he had been discovered and arrested; he sent out one or two parties to enquire if any person had been seen answering his description, and had resolved to go out in search for him, when he appeared at the gate, and gave up to his captain the papers which he had obtained. He gave a brief account of their seizure, and of his journey, and then retired to take the rest he so greatly needed.

When the papers were opened Gifford was not surprised to discover that Mr. Wentworth was the correspondent with the King's party, but he was annoyed to perceive that he knew all their movements; that he had enclosed a well-executed plan of the Grange, shewing the weakest points; that he was minutely informed of the strength of the garrison, the nature of their arms, and of the names of many recruits, and that there were references to other plans which had been suggested, which, if promptly executed, would compel the Parliamentarians to pay their taxes and free the country from their presence. It was with pleasure they found the discipline of their troops praised; "They paid," Mr. Wentworth said, "for everything; no one was molested; but for their constant parades, nobody would know that a strong garrison was near them." The troops at the Park were contrasted with them in an unfavourable manner: "They were disorderly, and of loose morals, oppressive alike to friends and enemies, and disliked by all."

When Lisle had finished the papers,—"I have a great disposition to smoke the Parson out," he said, "and to teach him to mind his own business; we

have left him in peace, and allowed him every Sabbath to preach up Church and King; this is his reward. I will—”

“ You will let him alone, Lisle, I know,” said Gifford; “ but we must discover who is the traitor.”

“ It is difficult to suspect the men; they are all apparently zealous, and they have little communication with the village, and none with Mr. Wentworth. Shall we accuse him,” said Lisle, “ and compel him to give evidence? Carlyon would not be slow, and a pistol might quicken his memory.”

“ No,” said Gifford; “ I lived peaceably with our old Rector, and although I have had little intercourse with the new, I cannot break through old ties: we must let him alone.”

“ And let him betray us to our ruin,” said Lisle.

“ Not so,” said Gifford; “ I will double the night-guard, send spies into the village, and, trust me, we shall not be long before we find out who it is that has taken so much trouble for our enemies.”

“ And I will try to discover what they are doing at Trevor Park before I am many days older,” replied Lisle.

“ Yes, but be cautious, and let Carlyon try his hand again.”

“ No, no, Gifford; that shall be my work, and mine alone.”

Gifford tried to dissuade Lisle, but he was inflexible, so he left him to make observations on the garrison, and on the state of the walls. The winter had begun early, and the ice was already thick upon the water, when, as Gifford went round with the plan

in his hand and noted the weak points, he observed that they were marked where the water was deepest, and it seemed impossible to cross; in a moment it flashed across his mind that the moat would bear in a few days, and that Wentworth's plan had reference to a night-attack, when the approach of a body of men could not be heard, and to places where they could advance up to the walls and scale them at different points. Having again gone round the walls, and examined the towers, he returned to Lisle, who coincided with his views, and proposed an early attack on Trevor Park in preference to awaiting an assault or harassing the men with long night-watches. Gifford acceded to his suggestion, but entreated him to let Carlyon go and reconnoitre the Park.

"I could fully trust him," said Lisle, "but it is my work, and I only must do it; if you will see to the arms and provide for us as you did before, we shall do very well."

"I intend to share in the attack," said Gifford; "the men had better be told that they are intending to attack us, and that they must be prepared."

In conversing with Alice, Lisle told her his past anxieties, and his suspicions that some one in the house was in frequent communication with the enemy.

Alice said she could not think of any person who would wilfully betray them.

"Perhaps not," said Lisle, "but they may do so ignorantly."

Alice thought over the matter, and at length suggested that one of the men should accompany her

maid on Sunday to the village, and see who were her companions; the girl had always asked to go to church, more with a view of meeting the young men of the village than from any attachment to the services, and had been allowed to go, under the impression that she was too simple to notice anything that was done at the Grange, or else too much occupied with her work.

No satisfactory intelligence being arrived at before Sunday, when Susan left the drawbridge one of the soldiers said that he should like to see the church, and would walk with her; Susan, suspecting nothing, accepted his company. On the way to church no one spoke to her, nor did there appear to be any person looking out for her. The services were as usual, and when they were ended Mr. Wentworth passed from the vestry into his own house; the congregation was small, and as they left the churchyard a young man came up and asked Susan if she had found a new sweetheart: the girl blushed, and said, "Jacob, you know better,—it's one of the soldiers at the Grange."

"And at your service," said the soldier.

"You are a stranger at church," said Jacob Smith: "I did not expect to see any of old Gifford's men there."

"We go where we can get good," said the soldier; "even though to church it be."

"Yes, no doubt," said Smith, "and you like to talk to a pretty girl by the way, eh? Susy, you are going to give up Jacob for a psalm-singer."

"No, Jacob," said Susan; "he offered to walk down

with me, quite chance-like, and you walk home with me every Sunday."

"And we will all go together to-day," said Jacob. "You are very full at the Grange now, soldier, I expect?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"How many are there of you, all told?" asked Smith.

"I don't count," said the man.

"Have you had many recruits lately?" he asked.

"Fairish," said the soldier to Jacob; not to be caught thought he himself.

"Your captains are often out," said Jacob Smith.

"Sometimes," said the soldier; "and I go out too."

"Do you care for venison, soldier?" asked Smith. "I can now and then get a piece of prime, and will bring it to the Grange if you like; who shall I ask for?"

"Faith Pursglove," said the man.

"And will they let me in if I come?" asked Jacob: "for I don't like a fool's errand."

"It depends who's on duty; but if you bring anything good we can find you customers," said the soldier.

Jacob called Susan on one side, and after ten minutes' whispering she joined her companion and they reached the drawbridge.

When the report was made to Gifford, he at once understood that the girl had been the victim of Jacob Smith. The young man was the son of an industrious farmer, preferring a vagrant life, and living by poaching; he had always money, yet never seemed to

do any work, and had plenty of clothes, without any apparent means of getting them honestly. He was well-known as a gambler and frequenter of fairs; those who knew him best were anxious to keep on good terms with him, for wherever he got plenty of cider, and now and then a present of a crown, the fewest sheep were carried off.

Gifford had never allowed black mail to be levied on him, and therefore Jacob Smith formed an intimacy with the servant maid to pay out old Gifford, as he said, and knowing the Rector's hostility to the Puritan party, he had kept him informed of all their movements. Sensible of the value of this information, and fully understanding Smith's character, Mr. Wentworth had paid him well, and thus for a long time had accurate information of the movements at the Grange. The sending out horsemen to watch the road had been done so secretly that only Lisle or Gifford knew for what purpose the men came or went. No sooner was the carrier of the information detected, than without giving a reason, Gifford forbade any one to leave the gate, and hastened on the preparations for attacking Trevor Park. Ladders were made, it was said, to be able to ascend the walls, and repel the enemy at any point; the men were exercised together, called to different points by signals, and thoroughly disciplined in the field.

Lisle prepared for a visit to the Park, and on the Tuesday he set off before daylight to reach a cross road, that he might approach the Park from London, and leave it again in the same direction; he had obtained the complete dress of a carter,

and having found a large basket, he filled it with eggs, two couple of fowls, a goose, and some herbs, and set out on his expedition. It was arranged that he should leave the Grange before daybreak, that only Gifford should know of his departure, and that no steps should be taken to ascertain anything concerning him for two days. He kept from Alice all knowledge of the expedition, judging, with true affection, that if she cared for him he would spare her pain, and if she did not, that he owed it to his duty to communicate his plans to as few persons as possible.

It was bright moonlight when he left the Grange, and having received Gifford's blessing as he left the gate, he moved quietly along the road, and crossing a lane struck into the copse which ran from Lunnonslane to the London road. The crisp grass yielded to his tread, and as he pushed aside the boughs they scattered the hoar frost in showers over him; now a hare darted across his path, then a pheasant rose up from the trees; no one was moving, and it was not until he had reached the London road that he met a man, laden like himself, with provisions for the Park. Lisle's object was to know everything, and to obtain as much information as possible from his companion; with this view he shewed his basket, and as both had nearly the same articles to sell, they agreed on asking one price. "They are a rough lot," said the man, "and will try to cheat us if they can; one comes to look and steals an egg, and while you look round another carries off two more: so I keep my basket before me, and look out sharply, so as to see all that goes on."

"A good plan," said Lisle; "have you sold much to them?"

"Not much since the old Colonel's death, and the dame's going to Oxford; they used to buy now and then a goodish few things of me, but the officers and soldiers don't buy much now."

"How is that?" said Lisle.

"Why," said the man, winking, "they have cleared nearly every hen-roost round here, and so there's none to sell."

Lisle laughed, and said, "It is a good reason; but will the officers buy of us, because if not, I may as well turn back; it's no use to lose time and eggs into the bargain."

"Yea, yea," said the man, "you give the sentry a couple of eggs, and he will let you pass. I always put a couple in a corner, and let him see them, and so I can pass any day."

Nothing could be more fortunate. The conversation went on about the weather, and farming, the badness of the times, and the troubles of the country, when, at a distance, they saw the sentry posted at the Park gate, and looking at him as they approached, he recognised Lisle's companion; and when he saw them both place the eggs in the hedge, he asked, "How many this morning?" and when Lisle said, "Half-a-dozen," he said, "All right; go up to the guard-room." Lisle thought it best to increase the usual gift at first, and thus accustom the sentries to expect a gratuity, and to let him pass the more freely. He had eluded suspicion thus far, even from his companion, and professing himself to be tired, sat down and took a survey of the house.

It was a fine house, not long rebuilt; the front was covered with ivy, and flowers had been trained up by the windows; the gardens looked deserted, but shewed that they had been once laid out with care; a thick shrubbery ran round the house, and enclosed the stables and outer offices; oaks in clumps were dispersed about the park, and an avenue of elms led up to the centre doorway; over the porch were emblazoned the arms of the Trevors, and every thing betokened the comfort in which the landed gentry lived. After sitting for a few minutes, Lisle proposed that they should go up to the guard-house, and asking his companion to lead the way, he walked by his side.

"It's a fine place," said Lisle: "I never saw it before."

"You may say that, and it has been beautiful: many's the party I've seen there, lords and ladies; and they do say that Queen Bess danced in that house," said the man.

"It looks a likely place," said Lisle; "it's well-built: they didn't spare the stone, or the timber either, for that matter."

"No," said his companion, "and if I can get hold of the steward that the poor Colonel's lady has left, you shall see the great rooms; they are very fine: pictures of the old bishops and kings, and great people, and full of rich furniture; there's none like it about here." Lisle said he should like to see it all, but he must be back to his home soon, and he didn't so much care.

"You may see it now, or perhaps never again," said the man, "for who knows what may happen now-a-days?"

"Yes," said Lisle, "you may well say that."

When they came to the guard-room the sentry received a small compliment, and the men were permitted to shew their baskets; they disposed of their contents after a few attempts at pilfering, and many oaths from the officers, who said that they were constantly raising the prices on them.

"There's hardly a fowl or an egg within ten miles," said the old man; "the men have cleared them all out."

"Cock-a-doodle-do! Cock-a-doodle-do!" crowed a voice, in excellent imitation of the lord of the barn-door.

"Yes, masters," said Lisle, "it's you that may crow, but we may pay the piper."

"Yes, after we have paid double the worth for your stuff, young jackanapes; think yourselves well off that you get paid at all," said an old officer.

Lisle tried to look stupid, and touching his hat, got away as soon as he could. His good-natured companion took him to the steward's room, and asked that his comrade might see the banqueting-hall, but the steward said it could not be allowed, and Lisle was not sorry to escape from the house. He had seen how carelessly the watch was maintained, how accessible the house was on all sides, and that the park afforded cover for any number of men to approach it unobserved. As he left the house he asked his companion to share his meal with him, and pulling out some coarse bread and bacon, they chatted to each other of the family and of the house.

"It's a fine old place, and the Colonel was a fine old

fellow, but a dreadful man to swear," said the man. "He would raise the whole house if any one opposed him, and they say that his father, who planted the elm avenue, and his grandfather, who built the house, were great men to swear, but they were very good to the tenantry, and brave men. The Colonel's uncle died at sea, fighting the Spaniards, and they have some swords and guns that were taken many thousands of miles away."

"And are all the men in the house now soldiers?" said Lisle, "or are they servants? there seems to be a vast many."

"About a hundred of them are soldiers, they tell me," said the man; "but they go and come, and there's no certainty. They do say that there are a hundred and fifty more to come next week, but there,—no one knows, unless, may be, the Captain, and he won't tell."

"It's no matter to us," said Lisle; "if they buy our fowls and eggs, they may come or stay as they like."

"Just so," said the man; "and now let us be off, for my house lies off the road a mile or more from where I met you, and I live three miles further on, at a lonesome place, and the old folks will be looking out for me."

They soon came to the place of parting, and promising to meet the following week at the Park, they each went on their way, Lisle thinking over his plans, and his companion light-hearted with the prospect of a good market.

Many an anxious look did Gifford turn to the road by which Lisle was to come, and as evening drew on it was with satisfaction that he saw him ap-

proach the gate, his basket slung on his back, his hat slouched over his face, and his gait in no way differing from a ploughman. Once more safe within the Grange, the friends congratulated each other, and Lisle detailed his successes, and laid before Gifford his plan for attacking the troops at the Park, appointing the day after for its execution, provided the frost continued.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Grange was occupied with preparations for active warfare, so that it was impossible to conceal from the men and from the inmates the immediate approach of a severe contest. The arms, which had been stored, were examined and delivered to the men ; swords were sharpened ; horse trappings repaired and strengthened, and the horses well fed.

Lisle thought it advisable to tell Alice that they had a choice of awaiting or making an attack, and that they intended to encounter the King's troops the next day. Alice was deeply moved at the communication, and asked if there was no way of escaping from the place, instead of living in constant alarms.

"Yes," said Lisle, "if we can surprise and disperse the troops at Trevor Park, your house will be as safe without soldiers as it is now with."

"We shall never be safe again," said Alice, sighing. "We once lived in peace, went and came when we liked ; now we are shut up like prisoners, and we are become Ishmaelites ; every man's hand against us, and ours against every man. I can see no end to it."

"Nor I," said Lisle; "but I shall do my duty, Alice."

"And risk your life for those who will never thank you," said Alice.

"What is life?" said Lisle. "A vapour; short at the longest, and valuable only as it is honourable and good."

"Life is more than that," said Alice: "it is only the few who can be eminent, yet God has given us many blessings without eminence, and a woman regards life as valuable when spent in domestic duties, in the peaceful enjoyments of a well-ordered home."

"I have no home, Alice, and in these times can hardly hope that I shall ever enjoy a peaceful home; therefore I must be content to struggle on in life,—I once hoped not alone."

"And why not?" Alice would have said more, but she did not see where the conversation would end; she paused, and Lisle said,—

"Alice, you cannot misunderstand me; you know that all life without you would be a blank, and that for you I would give up life freely."

"Oh Lisle! Lisle!" said Alice, "and am I to hear this, when I shall be in agony for you?"

"Yes, Alice, it is better, if—" he paused—"it is better that you should know that I have not trifled with you, that your goodness has not been lost on me, and I shall always be grateful for many hours of sunshine in a chequered life; if I fall, I shall remember you to my latest breath."

"You must not say so, Lisle; life has been very different since you came here; our future life has seemed greater; forgive me if I murmured

at our troubles, but I dread hourly some calamities that may rob me of those I love better, far better, than life."

Lisle cheered Alice with many words of comfort, told her of his visit to the Park, of his prospects of success, and then of the time when they might hope to live in London and enjoy repose.

It was arranged that the whole of the troops, numbering two hundred men, should leave the house together, and that they should set off as soon as the evening grew dark enough to screen them from observation. Lisle had explored a bye-road through which they could convey the men, and the cart containing the ladders covered with straw was to set off under Carlyon about two hours before sunset. Lisle was to attack the front of the house, and Gifford to line the shrubberies, and to be ready to occupy the roof of the house, in the event of a sharp resistance. In order to know each other, every man wore a large white stripe sewn on his coat, and the strictest orders were given that no man should leave his own company.

When the hour arrived every man was at his post; the veterans who had fought at Lunnon's-lane calm and resolute, the young soldiers eager for the fray, and all confident in their leaders. After a short prayer in the court there was perfect silence, and the men moved noiselessly on the road. Lisle led the front rank, and Gifford rode with his own men. A foot-man was carried behind each horseman, in order to leave fewer men in charge of the horses when they dismounted for the attack. Carlyon, who was anxious to be in front, was second in command to Lisle.

Langton, the son of a yeoman, and a young officer, volunteered with Lisle to attack the sentry.

All proceeded as they desired; Lisle arrested one or two country people whom he met, lest they should give an alarm, and they had the satisfaction of finding Carlyon awaiting their arrival at the rendezvous. The ladders were distributed, and the men, dismounting, were led by Gifford through cross-roads until they came to the park, which was only surrounded by a hedge. The men advanced cautiously, and Gifford crept so close to the house, that he could hear the songs and loud laughter of the men.

The wind, which had risen during the march, whistled through the trees, and prevented the approach of the men from being heard; the troops advanced rapidly, and long before Lisle arrived at the park gate Gifford was ready to attack the house. It was agreed that Lisle should fire a gun immediately on his arrival at the house, and that Gifford's men should then assault the enemy, and commence the escalade. Lisle left his troop, dismounted, and with his companions carrying their market-baskets, came up to the sentry, having asked permission to go up to the house, were, as they expected, refused; Lisle then stooped down in front of the man, who was knocked over with one blow by the powerful arm of Carlyon, and threatened with instant death if he spoke; his hands were bound, and Langton, compelling him to run rapidly, in a few moments came up with the troop, and gave orders for their advance. As soon as they reached the gates Carlyon took his company, and moving through the woods, placed a part of them

under a clump of magnificent oaks, while Lisle ordered the rest to run from tree to tree, in line with the avenue, and thus to avoid discovery. It was his intention to surprise the other sentry at the door of the guard-room, as he had done the man at the gate. The first in every danger, he led the line, and reached the end of the avenue undiscovered: four or five men were clustered round him, and he saw that the whole troop were rapidly advancing, when he resolved to rush on the sentry, who was observed to be listening as though he heard footsteps, yet as uncertain whether he was deceived by the wind, which had increased to a gale, and was accompanied with mist and rain. The sentry seeing men advance, challenged them and fired immediately; Lisle rushed on to the guard-house, and in a moment the house was in an uproar. Gifford had mistaken the fire of the sentry for a signal to advance, and was already in possession of the roofs and upper rooms, while Lisle and his men were struggling below. Loud shouts of "God and the right" were answered boldly but feebly by "God and our King." The struggle was short, and Carlyon, rapidly bringing up his men, forced the rear of the house, and in a few moments the troops had fled or surrendered; the Captain, surprised, yielded the house without an attempt to rally or escape. In the *mélée* one or two men had fallen, but the surprise was so complete that the King's troops had barely time to get their arms before they found themselves attacked on all sides, and surrounded; the advantage of situation was more than counterbalanced by the surprise, and by the rapidity of the attack.

Gifford had led his men with consummate prudence ; he had not fired a shot, but descending from the roofs into the garrets he made prisoners of all that he met, and entered the guard-room as the affray was ended. The wounded men were soon cared for, and the prisoners were allowed to repose until the morning ; a messenger was sent to the Grange to announce the success of the enterprise, and to say that no lives had been lost ; the horses were then moved up to the Park, and arrangements were made for the disposal of the prisoners. After some discussion, it was resolved that Carlyon should take the prisoners to London, to be exchanged for any of their own party, and that any of the men who wished should be allowed to remain and serve under Gifford at the Grange. In order to effect this arrangement, messengers were sent to the village to obtain the necessary provisions for the day, and also for the journey. The house was ill-supplied, and so little did they apprehend an attack, that they only kept their supplies from day to day ; that they might, Carlyon said, have been starved into a surrender by an occupation of the roads. But one officer left the King's service, and such of the men as viewed the matters in dispute lightly ; many escaped, and in the morning only forty men and officers left for London.

When the necessary arrangements had been made, Gifford addressed the men in one of the half-sermons of the time. He reminded them that they had been twice victorious, and without loss of their number that they had benefited largely by the experience and discipline of their officers, and that they were now to

be led by one who had proved himself fit to command by his readiness to obey. He exhorted them to shew mercy to all, and especially to treat well those whom the providence of God had delivered into their hands ; then bidding them God speed, he left them to pursue their journey. Carlyon had received letters from Cromwell appointing him to active service, and he left his captains in the hope that he might be sent to the army of the North.

It was not until the last man had left the gate that Lisle went to look through the house, which he still held with fifty men ; the others had been sent with the recruits to the Grange under Gifford, who preferred to remain at home until it was decided what was to be done with the house. The arms were seized and packed in waggons, but the furniture remained untouched, and Lisle suggested that they should leave the house in complete order under the care of the old steward, and allow no plundering ; that the wounded men should be left in charge of one of the most experienced soldiers, and then they should again occupy the Grange, and await the arrival of the troops from Oxford, if they should venture to attack them. He pointed out to Gifford that to defend the house properly he must ruin the park, and at once cut down some hundred or more trees ; that it was doubtful if they would increase their influence by holding Trevor house, and it diminished, if it did not destroy, every chance of taking the initiative in the event of another attack. Yielding to these suggestions, Gifford after some days removed the remainder of the troops, and, accompanied by Lisle with an escort to guard the trophies of

victory, they rode through the village of Batcombe to the Grange. The villagers, by their loud cheers, gave vent to feelings which at other times they would have thought it prudent to suppress. Mr. Wentworth, who knew that his messenger had been stopped and his papers taken, trembled for his safety ; it was with the utmost anxiety that he watched the troops pass by the church and again cross the common towards the Grange. When Gifford and Lisle approached the walls, they saw Alice waving a handkerchief to them, and expressing her joy at their safe arrival ; and no sooner did the drawbridge touch the ground than, bounding forward, she jumped up to embrace her father, who, taking her on his saddle, rode with her into the court. It was a season of great joy to her, for she anticipated not only a long peace, but that Lisle would remain with them. She was already forming plans for riding out, when Lisle said to her,—

“ You forget, Alice, that while my comrades are here I must ride out with them.”

Alice went from the court, and told her mother of the safe return of her father and Lisle, begging her to come and see the waggons laden with arms, which were come up to the door.

The wife had already seen too much trouble to enter into the joy of her daughter ; she had never entered into her husband’s strong feelings against the King, and when she heard that they had conquered the troops at Trevor Park, and had brought away all the arms and ammunition, it seemed rather to give her a shock, that a place she had admired all her

life should be invaded by rude soldiers, than pleasure that the troops had gained a victory ; she was thankful for her husband's safety, but shewed no emotions of joy at his success.

The arms were safely deposited in the rooms, the men went to their quarters, and in a few days the Grange resumed its busy appearance. Provisions were purchased and stored, messengers went and came, and officers, under Lisle's directions, examined the country round, and endeavoured to discover whether any troops were on their way from Oxford ; they could hear of no preparations, and as the people were well-affected to the Parliament, and paid their taxes, it became of less importance to maintain so many men at the Grange. A month or two passed away very happily with Alice and Lisle in making plans for the future, and with the knowledge that their union would be sanctioned by both parents, when a letter at length arrived from Cromwell, urging the immediate despatch of troops for London, and Lisle's presence there ; he left it to Captain Gifford either to come with his family to London, or, if he thought the country quite safe, he advised the abandoning all appearances of defence, and the removal of arms except such as were enough for the men-servants engaged in the work of the farm. He praised Carlyon, whom he had sent to the North on special service ; and he expressed his warmest acknowledgments of Lisle's past services, and trusted that on his arrival in London he might find as much use for his pen as he had hitherto done for his sword.

When the letter had been duly considered, Gifford

resolved to stay in the country ; he thought that the Grange was safe, and that he could keep his land in order, and if Lisle remained in town he could then come up, but until matters were more decided he preferred to keep a home for his family ; " Of whom you are always one, my more than son," he said to Lisle.

There could be no objection to this prudent arrangement, and Alice was glad to hear that Lisle would probably cease from active service, and at once attend to his profession.

She employed herself in preparing little comforts for his use, and promised to send to him whenever a courier came. The arrival and departure of troops was so constant a scene that Mary took little notice of it ; she was sorry to lose Lisle's company, as much for Alice's sake as for her own ; she was glad to know that the farming was to begin again in earnest, and of the opportunities it would give her of following her favourite employments. Captain Gifford, as usual, saw all the preparations made, and having loaded the waggons with arms, and seen that the men were in order, he handed them over to Lisle, addressing them as usual on the duties of good soldiers and God-fearing men. Alice begged permission to ride with them a few miles, that she might see them safely on the road, and Lisle asked her with a smile if she thought that she could protect them through Lunnons-lane.

" Yes," said Alice, " if you will let me I will ride through the first."

" No," said Lisle, " you will not ; but if you wish it, and your father consents, he shall lead the troop for the first few miles, and we will bring up the rear ;

you have seen so much of soldiers that you don't like to let them leave."

"No, Lisle," Alice said; "all soldiers would not have the same interest as these have; they are our friends, they have eaten our salt, and joined with us in prayer. Many of them owe their conversion from sin to my dear father, so that they are more like brothers to me."

"Well said," answered Lisle; "they are brave fellows, and many of them will be as good soldiers as Carlyon before they reach the army; he is very bitter against the King's party; he would gladly have fired Trevor Park, and burnt the house and all the beautiful furniture to ashes. Such men, though useful, often bring dishonour on the soldier's name."

"Carlyon was very reserved and cold in his manner," said Alice. "My father always appeared to me the most reserved of men, but he never seemed to speak, and yet he knew everything."

"Had you seen him in the attack, Alice, you would have thought him quite another man; he was eager, and supported me with an utter recklessness of his own life. He will fall bravely or make a great name."

Gifford gave his consent to the request, which Alice wisely preferred through Lisle, and the whole party left the Grange in high spirits. On arriving at Lunnonslane, Lisle explained to Alice the nature of the attack, and the narrow escape he had from utter destruction; and he said that he felt uneasy until the waggons were safely through the wood. The officer who conducted the centre had taken every precaution, and 'ford rode through the wood before he allowed the

waggons to move. When they had ridden a few miles further Alice and her father took an affectionate leave of Lisle, and bidding him farewell, rode rapidly home.

The march was effected with safety, and in three days Lisle reached London, and presenting his officers and troop to the Parliamentary generals, was thanked for his zeal, and invited to meet Cromwell and the leaders on the following day.

CHAPTER IX.

THE departure of the troops to London and the removal of the ammunition and forage brought back the Grange to its former uses. The labourers had seen enough of service to handle a gun readily, and were considered sufficient to protect the house. Custom had so far created a habit of watchfulness, that the drawbridge was raised at night, and one of the men kept guard, but more to prevent any lawless attack of ill-disposed persons than to resist a regular siege if it should be attempted. Gifford conducted the Sunday services in his house, unless by chance an itinerant preacher wandered to the Grange to find a hospitable and welcome reception: then the minister offered prayer, and never departed without a substantial gratuity. During the week-days the farm occupied the attention of its owner, and the fields began again to shew the effects of his industry and able direction. The war was so far removed from Batcombe that the villagers talked of their troubles as things gone by, and appeared to have little interest in the

civil war waging bitterly in the great towns and around the strongholds of the country. The news from London arrived regularly at the Grange, for Lisle had many means of communication, and his interest in Alice rather increased than diminished by his absence in the busy world of London. He had resumed his profession, and been able to procure a large share of public and private business; his intimacy with Cromwell brought with it an introduction to the leading men in power, and he laboured zealously to unite the factions which were continually rising up among the Parliamentarians. He had foreseen that the contest would not end in any compromise, that whatever might be the position of the King, the royal party would not be satisfied with anything less than a complete triumph, which placed life and property at their mercy, and restored the power which the King had lost. Lisle looked with suspicion on the few noblemen who were attached to their cause, suspecting that private ambition and revenge, rather than a love of liberty, stimulated them to attack the Crown, and, in the person of the King, their own order; Essex, he was convinced, had the ability and the intention, if he saw an opportunity, to transfer the crown to his own head. Cromwell's ability was the counterpoise, and thus Lisle hoped that a republic might be constructed by the jealousy of the leaders and watchfulness among the subordinates. He did not conceal his republican views, and had many friends among those who thought that the time was approaching when such a form of government might be safely established; it seemed almost inevitable, that if the King did not fly

from the country he would fall into the hands of some of the unscrupulous generals, and end his life by violence; no one expected from Charles that dignified end which has endeared him to the English Church, and raised him to the title of the 'Martyr King,' settling probably the form of government in England for ages to come.

In the early part of May Gifford received a letter from Cromwell, saying that he should not want him until some time later in the year, but asking for any recruits who could be trusted and were religiously affected. A few of the servants and some young men from the village volunteered, and were sent forthwith to London in small parties, to avoid suspicion and to ward off any further attack on the Grange. Gifford knew that he was not without enemies, who would probably revenge themselves for the defeat at Lunnons-lane and for the attack on Colonel Trevor's house, he therefore carried pistols on his visits to the market town, and without making any display, was careful to be well on his guard. He had ridden to Batcombe, and was proceeding to the market, when he overtook some neighbours going to sell their cattle, and being in want he purchased some cows and rode on, when at the same time he observed two or three men idling about the road, and apparently going with them to the market. "There's a fellow that's up to anything," said one of the farmers. "I hope we shan't meet him on our road home to-night."

Gifford only smiled, and his companion said, "You are thinking you have encountered worse foes, Mr. Gifford."

"Yes, neighbour Ainslie, I am not easily moved after months of watching by day and night; these idle cutpurses do not want to meet men who have had their lives in their hands every day for nearly two years."

"No, Mr. Gifford, while we are together we are safe, but I should not like to meet them alone." They then changed the subject of conversation, and riding on, talked of crops, prices, and the last news of the war.

On their arrival in town, Gifford transacted his business, and called upon some of his friends and the supporters of the cause; he was a welcome guest in many houses: by the Puritans he was esteemed a saint, and by the middle classes the avenger of their wrongs at Lunnons-lane, but Gifford's greatest friend was Elijah Penty, as he styled himself, Minister of the Everlasting Gospel; he was a self-educated man, earnest, and well read in the Scriptures. He had a few sheep, as he termed his congregation, whom he had gathered out of the world, and from that rag of popery, the Church; next to a bitter hatred of parsons and bishops was Elijah's hatred of kings, whom, he said, the Lord had given to Israel, as well as to other nations, to punish them for their iniquities. When Elijah met Gifford in the market-place he welcomed him in the quaint style then coming into fashion:—"Brother Gifford, the Lord hath done great things by thee; blessed be thou of the Lord, thou hast smitten the Amalekite Trevor, and devoured the Philistines at Lunnons-lane."

"We did it not by our own arms, Brother," said Gifford.

"Nay, nay, Brother; the Lord fought for Israel: but come home and refresh thyself, Rachel will gladly welcome thee to our vine, and thou mayest eat in peace, none making thee afraid."

"I must be home, Brother," said Gifford; "for it is not safe to leave the Grange for any long time with only women and a few men and boys."

"Brother Gifford, no man wags his tongue since the Amalekite was killed; that rebellious son hath often taunted the Lord's people, and blasphemously named me Old Trust in the Lord; now all are silent."

"And not less dangerous, Brother Elijah; but I will to home with thee; and it will please Alice to tell her I have seen Rachel and thy daughter."

The two friends left the market-place, and quietly wended their way to a small old-fashioned house in the Weint, at the back of which stood the meeting-place of Elijah's few disciples. The greetings were hearty and sincere, for Gifford was their champion, and the enemies of the Lord had fallen before his arm; the table was set, and in a short time the best that the house afforded was placed before the minister and his guest; a long grace preceded the meal, and Elijah mingled with blessings on the food curses on the enemies of the people of the Lord.

During the meal Gifford was compelled to relate the attack on Colonel Trevor's house, and the part which he had taken in it; the Grange had become a place of fame, and the minister was never tired of questioning, and hearing of attacks and repulses, of night-watches, or of training and marching troops. Now it was the

sword of the Lord and Gideon ; then Lisle, he said, was a Joshua, and he concluded by hoping that the Lord would root out Amalek until there were none remaining, and he wished that, like Samuel, he might hew Agag — meaning the King — in pieces before the Lord.

The evening drew on, and there were yet farewell prayers and blessings, so that by the time that Gifford got to the "Black Bull," and had mounted his horse, it was dusk. He paused a few minutes when in his saddle, and while his horse was held examined the priming of his pistols. "No one will hurt thee, Master Gifford," said the landlord, who had long known and esteemed him.

"I hope not," said Gifford ; "but I have learned in a school of tribulation, and am watchful."

"It is well," said the landlord. "Good-night."

Gifford left the inn, and putting his horse to a brisk trot cleared the town, and finding that he was not likely to have any company he did not draw his rein until he came to the foot of the hill that leads into the village of Batcombe, when, thinking himself at home, he walked his horse slowly up the hill. He had got about half-way when the road turned almost at an angle, where he fancied that he saw figures in the mist before him : he put spurs to his horse, who reared and dashed forward ; almost at the same moment a blow aimed from behind struck him on the head. Gifford fired, and a groan assured him that one of his assailants had fallen, but in an instant his bridle was seized, and as he drew his remaining pistol another blow brought him to the ground.

He was for a few moments stupefied, or rather stunned, by the blow, and by the suddenness of the attack, but on recovering he found that his hands were tied behind him, and that he had been dragged into a copse which skirted the side of the road. It was evident that resistance was useless, three men stood over him, when he asked why they had attacked him, they answered, "Remember Lunnonslane." Gifford then believed that he was seized by political partisans, but on their rifling his pockets, and taking everything from him, he thought that he had fallen among thieves, who after stripping him of his money, and carrying off his horse, would leave him to find his way home. He heard some of the assailants carrying away the wounded man, who cursed him bitterly; but the three who watched over him did not move. On his trying to rise, one of them said,—

"Can ye travel now?"

"Yes," said Gifford; "I will start for home if you will undo my hands." They all laughed, and said,— "Home, will ye; it's to gaol you mean,—that's to be your home."

"Any where," said Gifford, "I am in your hands; but I am sorely bruised, and if you have any feeling for one who has never injured you, you will not cause me unnecessary pain. By whose orders are you acting?"

"By our own, to be sure—no one orders us: we know you, Master Gifford, to be the King's enemy, and as we live at the King's cost, we have taken you, and I expect we shall make something handsome by the job."

"And you mean to sell me, and take blood-money," said Gifford.

"Call it what you like,—we shall get the reward for seizing a traitor."

Gifford could not understand the exact character of the men, and it was their purpose to conceal their names and business; sometimes he thought they were soldiers, but the cavalier soldiers would not have plundered him like common thieves; they were indeed lawless men, such as arise in every time of domestic strife, men who, regardless of all parties, use the one that suits their purpose best to plunder or to destroy.

After a short time Gifford expressed his readiness to go, and they led him through the wood to a lane, where he was put on his horse, as he walked with great difficulty, from the bruises which he had received on his recent fall. The men were struck by Gifford's fortitude; there were no unmanly complainings, no useless requests; occasionally he asked to be helped, and it was done; then he went on, as he afterwards said, not knowing whether he went, but knowing that he was in the hands of Him who can control evil intentions to good ends.

It was past midnight before they came to the forest, for their journey had been slow, and when Gifford was told to dismount and enter the forest, he said, "This is not the way to any prison."

"Who told you that?" asked the leader.

"My own observation," was Gifford's reply: "this is a forest, and if you mean to kill me, it is as well here anywhere; I will not go further."

"We are not quite so fond of killing as that comes to, Master Gifford," said the leader, "and I suppose you won't object to a supper and a sleep; all we kill is venison, and you will sup off some if you go gently, if not—"

"If not," said Gifford, "I have told you to do your worst."

"No, Master Gifford, you may live and sing hymns yet, if they that pay us will find you a cage;" the three men all laughed.

Gifford remained mounted, but was stopped again after they had gone a mile, and told to dismount; he could not without assistance, for although his hands had been loosed, he was cold and exhausted. He was very anxious for his wife and child; they would be waiting for him, and sending out the men to scour the country in search of him: his pains were therefore aggravated by his anxiety for others, but he did not allow even a groan to escape; now and then he prayed audibly, and was not interrupted, for he had already won some respect from his captors; when he was on his feet he said, "What next?"

"You must have your eyes bandaged," said the leader.

"It is dark, and I cannot see," said Gifford. "I will not betray you."

"You must be bandaged," said the leader.

"It is well, then," said Gifford; "be it so."

He submitted, and after he had waited for a draught of water from a brook that he heard bubbling up almost at his feet, he was led for some distance by two of the men: he appeared to go up hill and down dale, until after an hour's walking and breakin-

through brambles and underwood, he was bidden to stoop and crawl on his hands and knees. "One of you lead on," said Gifford, "and I will follow."

"Afraid?" said the leader.

"No, I have nothing to fear: unbandage my eyes and I will lead on anywhere," said Gifford. "I fear God, I do not fear what man can do unto me." The men were abashed; they tried to laugh, but the courage of the brave and good man was so different from their own, that they were forced to respect it: he was alone, and yet as undaunted as they were, surrounded by friends. One led the way, and Gifford crawled for some distance on his knees, until he found by the increasing warmth that he was in a room, where he heard the crackling of a fire. His eyes were unbandaged, and he found himself in a cave, which had been partly excavated and was partly a natural formation; the fire lighted up the rude walls, and as Gifford lay down he welcomed even this dungeon, for it was a place where he could rest.

CHAPTER X.

IT was very evident to Gifford what was the occupation of the captors: guns and rifles were hung up, and deer skins were spread about to dry, or for use; there were also skins of smaller animals, and some luxuries which had been obtained in forays on the neighbouring farms; an old church alms-dish was placed on a temporary shelf, and Gifford recognised in the men bearing the grapes of Eshcol an article of church furniture,

which he had known for many years at Batcombe Church, and which had disappeared during the occupation of Trevor Park ; the blame being laid on the Puritans, who hated the Church, and therefore must of necessity plunder its most sacred property. The lawless rioters who toasted " Church and King " had been the depredators.

As Gifford stood by the fire, a woman came from behind a rough boarding, which served as a place of concealment, and was used as a bed-room ; he fancied that he had seen her face, but it was coarse, and she looked brutalized by hard usage and drink.

She started, and then, with the look of a maniac, said, " What brings thee here, old man ? "

" Your companions," said Gifford ; " and I suppose they intend to murder me, or if not, to sell me to those who will."

" Phil wouldn't take the life of anybody," said the woman. " He kills deer, and prigs a bit now and then, but Phil doesn't murder ; and he's no worse, as I know, than those I saw at the Hall, for they would have killed anybody, but Phil only robs the straight-faces."

" And did they ever hurt you ? " asked Gifford.

" I dun know ; they druv us out of Batcombe, and we couldn't live, and Phil would drink, and now it's come to this."

" And you know me ? " said Gifford.

" Yes," said the woman, " I think you're Master Gifford."

" I am," said Gifford ; " and I have seen you."

" Yes, many's the day at Batcombe Church, afore

there was all this here preachin, and prayin, and fightin, all about nobody knows what."

Just at this moment Phil came into the cave, and asked if the man was preaching Nance a sermon.

"No," said Nancy, "he's talking very civil like."

"Get the supper, Nance," said Phil, "and don't listen to his jaw, he's a Philadelphia parson;" and he laughed at his own wit.

Phil went out, and Nancy was busy preparing the supper, but she contrived to talk to Gifford, and to ask after some of the villagers.

And he remembered to have seen Nancy, a pretty, rough girl, who lived on the waste, but whose parents had been turned out of their hut soon after she was married to Phil Clarkson, a man whose reputation was more than doubtful.

"You have made this place comfortable," said Gifford.

"As well as I can," said Nancy; "but it's miserable at best, Master Gifford, to turn night into day, and day into night; to be forced to lie without fire sometimes for two days together, and never to know who's on our track, isn't just a nice life for any one; but they'll answer for it some day as drove us to it."

"And you will have to answer too, Nancy," said Gifford. "Why don't you change your way of living? you are breaking God's laws, and man's laws."

"We only take wild things like, and they that hunt them do the same; there's not much difference that I see," said Nancy.

"They have the right to take them, and you have not," said Gifford.

"I dun know about right," said Nancy ; "they are free to all that catch them."

Phil came in, and Nancy was silent ; his companions followed, and Nancy was busy at the great pot which hung over the fire.

" You'll have a famous stew, old gentleman," said Jack, coming to the fire, " and that's better than being in the King's lodgings at Winchester, or hanging on an elm for crows to peck at."

Gifford said nothing, but looked on the fire, and thought over the occurrences of the last few hours ; he was very weary.

" Sulky, old fellow ?" said Jack, again. " Sing us one of your deadly lively hymns."

" Nonsense, Jack," said Nancy. " Master Gifford, for I know him, is too good for us."

" Whew, w-h-ew," said Jack, " who made you so clever, Nancy ?"

" Mind your own business, Jack," said Nancy.

" I will," said Jack ; " sing us a hymn, old fellow. Now for it."

" No," said Phil, coming from behind the screen, " you shall sing, Jack ; you are a regular good singer, and shall sing our first song."

Jack began :—

" We foresters live a merry, merry life,

More free than any king ;

We handle the gun, we carry the knife,

And sharply our rifles ring.

Through the green woods, ho !

We merrily go,

And merrily foresters sing heigh ho !"

"Well done, Jack," cried Phil, "well done; now for another stave."

"Supper's ready, Phil," said Nancy, "no more songs."

"Another verse," said Phil, "and then we'll have particular metre."

Jack resumed:—

We foresters are the sons of the soil,
Who stand up for the right;
We know not labour, we never toil,
But we trip by the moonlight.
Through the green woods, ho!
We merrily go,
And merrily foresters sing heigh ho!"

"Now for supper, Nancy; and mind, Jack's to have double allowance for his song."

"And I'll eat two shares," said Westeomb Willy, "and what's left is for the old gentleman."

"No, you won't," said Nancy; "there's plenty, and enough for a good feast to-morrow."

"You're very sharp on us, Nancy," said Westeomb Willy; "maybe you want us to bring you some new ribbons."

"She wants none of your ribbons," said Phil, angrily.

Westeromb Willy was silent, he was afraid of provoking Phil, who was the most daring of the gang, and their leader. Phil was kind to Nancy after his own fashion, and it was known that he would very soon get rid of any one who insulted her. Willy was thoroughly depraved, and without one virtue to redeem a long catalogue of vices. He was a traitor among thieves, and constantly drunk; fear often kept

him from accepting rewards which he coveted, and Jack had promised Westcomb Willy if ever he broke up the Nest, as he called the cave, he would break him up when they were free.

Phil said, "Nancy, what's the matter, gal?"

"Nothing, Phil; but did ye get out of the scrape."

"Yes, Nancy, my gal," said Jack, "and we are going to take the old fellow a side of venison to stop his mouth; we've agreed not to call and see him again."

"You'll get Phil's neck into a halter some day, Jack," said Nancy.

"And then marry his widow," said Jack, laughing loudly.

"Take care, Jack, and don't tread on my corns; you know what I mean, Jack," said Phil.

"Aye," said Jack, "I know."

"Now, old Belzebub, come and eat," said Westcomb Willy.

"Will," said Nance, "don't you go on so to Master Gifford."

"Very well, old gal," said Will.

Nancy poured the soup into a wooden bowl, and picking out some nice pieces of meat, gave them with some very dark, sour-looking bread, to Gifford, who, asking the blessing of God upon his meal, began to partake with a keen appetite of the food that was given him. The men drank a good deal of sour beer, of which they offered some to Gifford, and then began to talk of their foray. They had been out to see if they could pick up one of the farmers, but seeing Gifford, and knowing that a reward was

set on his head, they resolved, if possible, to seize him, although they knew that they ran great risk from his carrying fire-arms, and his reputation for skill in using them.

"What did you bring Master Gifford here for?" said Nance, after sitting silent for some time.

"I'll tell you, Nance, my gal, by-and-bye," said Phil.

"Tell me now, Phil; only a word or two."

"Well, Nance, it's a money job; and he's to go to Winchester jail, and we shall get a hundred pounds; and I'll give up this trade, and we'll leave the forest life."

"I wish we may, Phil; but you can't trust Jack, nor Westcomb Willy. He's looking at us, and I won't say any more. I am afraid of that man, Phil; I know he's never up to good. He's playing civil to me, and always running out agin you, when you are out of the way."

Phil gave a look; it said death to Westcomb Willy. It was the fierce, Cain look of the murderer.

"No, no, Phil, leave the rascal; he'll spin his own halter."

"Very well," said Phil; and turning to Willy, who stood looking angrily at the table, he said, "What is it, Will?"

"Nothing," said Will, "only you can take care of yourselves, but I may take my chance, and when I have made all secure for you, do as I can for myself."

"You grumbling son—" said Phil, but Nancy interrupted him, saying,—

"There's the pot kept hot for you on the fire, Will,

and plenty more beer in the jar ; set to work, and let's have no quarrelling."

"Very well, Nance," said Willy ; and he sat down, angrily brooding over his plans of revenge. He wanted to get rid of Phil, and he wanted to get Nancy to live with him. He could not quite make up his mind what to do, but he resolved to try his hand on some treachery which would place Phil in jail, and then wait for the result.

When supper was ended, he said, "Phil, what about this man and the reward?"

"We don't talk about hares here till we catch 'em, Westcomb Willy," said Jack. "You seem very anxious about the money, and you didn't shew your carcase till the man was down, and poor Tom got the bullet thro' his arm."

"I didn't go for to ask you anything," said Willy ; "I asked Phil how much I was to have, and I shall know, or know the reason why."

"No threats here," said Phil, with one of his looks that said, Distrust my authority if you dare. Will was silent, and then grumbled out,—

"Who's to take the fellow to Winchester?"

"You, if you like," said Phil ; "but if you hurt a hair of his head, I'll settle accounts with you."

"You're mighty cross-grained to-night, Phil," said Westcomb Willy.

"Yes," said Phil, "and mayhap you'd be if you knew all that I know."

"Then tell me, Phil."

"You'd be wiser than me, Will, and that won't do; you know enough, and too much, now. Did you ever

hear any skulking fellow talk about cracking up Phil's roost?"

"No, upon my soul, Phil! no!" said Westcomb Willy.

"Your soul!" said Phil, with a laugh; "your soul! You never did hear of any good friend threatening Phil! Well, if you do, tell him," and Phil jumped up, and seizing a rifle, snapped the lock. All was confusion; Westcomb Willy shook, Jack laughed, Nance ran from behind the screen, where she had been talking with Gifford, and Phil whispered between his teeth, "Tell him I'll blow his cursed head to pieces."

"Yes, Phil, yes," said Westcomb Willy.

Jack now joined in the conversation, and said that he would go with Westcomb Willy, and get another of the party to join them in taking Gifford to Winchester, and bringing back the reward.

Phil agreed to the plan, and promised that they should start on the next day, so as to pass only one night on the road; and after some further discussion they lay down to sleep, and Phil went to the little place screened off from the rest of the cave, where Gifford and Nancy were still in earnest conversation in a low tone.

"Your bed is there," said Phil, shewing Gifford a heap of deer-skins. "Good night."

"Good night," said Gifford, mildly but firmly. And he lay down to sleep, overcome with the fatigue and anxiety of the day; but not before he had knelt, and solemnly offered his prayer to God for himself, his family, and for those who had captured him, and were about to deliver him to his enemies.

CHAPTER XI.

"WHAT have you been chattering about to old Gifford, Nance?" said Phil, as he came behind the screen.

"Speak low, Phil," said Nance.

"Aye, girl, if you like, but what's it all about?"

"Well, Phil, he talked about the wicked life we led, and said as there was no happiness here in this world, so there would be no peace in the next; and he wanted me to ask you to go and tell his wife and daughter where he was."

"To let the justices come and take us, Nance."

"No, no, Phil, but to say that he was alive and well. He's written a bit of a letter, but I can't make it out; he says it's only to say he's alive and a prisoner."

"I'll take no letter; I can't read, and I won't trust any that can. There's that Westcomb Willy is the best scholard of the lot, and up to any villany. I don't like sending Gifford with him; but Tricky Tom is to come to-morrow, and he shall go, or we shall get no money, for Willy would lie for a penny, and sell us for a groat."

"Now, Phil, I know if you go to Gifford's house you will get a good reward, and then let us leave this wild life, and try to get work. You know I'll do any work; aye, I'll beg before I'll live like a wild beast, fearing every moment lest we should be shut up for life."

"And where can we go, Nance? who would hire Phil? They know me for miles round Batcombe, and gave me a bad character before I deserved it; but now I am quits."

"But what's the good? as Master Gifford says; it cannot go on for ever; if the day is slow in coming, it is sure."

"I know, Nance; and what's to become of poor Nance then?" said Phil. "But what does Gifford want? I'll do the honest thing now by him; I wish I had never had a hand in it at all."

"He wants you to go as early as you can to his house, and to tell his wife. Just think, Phil, how I should go on if you didn't come back when you promised; I've many days now, I can't eat a bit for trouble when you are away, feared I may never see you again."

"Aye, gal, I know you're a right good 'un and a true," said Phil. "I'll be off early, but I must tell Jack before I go, and the old 'un must wait a day."

They both lay down to sleep, Nancy happy that she could serve a man she respected for his goodness, and whose kindness had extended to the poor around his house and neighbourhood. Phil thought he had not done much good, and it would ease his mind a bit to help Gifford, whom he was sorry to have taken, but, on account of others, could not let go.

The night soon passed away, and with the early dawn Gifford saw Phil come into the cave and light a rush. "Am I to get up?" he said.

"No," said Phil, "lie still and wait until I come home again."

Jack and Westcomb Willy slept on, and Phil doubted if he should wake them ; but at last he woke Jack, and said, " I'm off, Jack ; I shall be back by midnight, if not before ; tell Will he's not to move off until he hears from me, and let Tricky Tom stay in the Nest, only don't go out ; but I may chance to want you, and if so, I'll send."

" All's right, I hope," said Jack, " for I am not safe about him," pointing to Will. " He's no more feeling than a brute, no, nor so much ; and as for Tom, he'd do any mortal thing for money."

" Good-bye, Jack," said Phil. " It's about the old 'un I am going ; no harm to nobody ; and no risk to nobody but myself. Good-bye."

Jack trusted Phil, and asked no more questions.

It was a fine morning ; the air was clear and bracing, and the dewdrops hung on forest and field. Phil bounded through the forest at a quick pace, and reached the high road, where he hoped to get a lift for a few miles, and thus reach the Grange at an early hour. He travelled alone for some time, and at last was overtaken by a cart going to Batcombe. He got a ride without difficulty, and when he said he was going to the Grange, the driver asked if he had heard of Gifford's being lost.

" Aye," said Phil, " I have, worse luck."

" Yes, it's worse luck for all on us. He was a prayin, God-fearin man, and it's them King's men has done it all."

" Done what ?" asked Phil.

" Taken him to prison, as sure as a gun," said the man.

"Shouldn't wonder," said Phil.

And then his companion launched out into praises of Gifford's courage and goodness, which occupied them until they came near to Batcombe, when Phil said, "I'll cut across the fields here."

"So you know the road?" said the driver.

"Aye," said Phil.

"Why, you're as knowing as Phil Clarkson," said the driver, "and they say he knows every road in the parish, and forty roads more."

Phil laughed, thanked him, and said if he met Phil he'd tell him.

And the driver said to himself, "I should never wonder if it be the man himself."

It was only a short walk to the Grange, and, refreshed by his ride, Phil was soon at the drawbridge asking admission to see Mistress Gifford, for whom he had an important message.

"We have many important messages here," said the man; "wait until I have orders."

He then sent to the house, and was told to admit the man if he was alone. The bridge was soon let down, and Phil said, as he came under the tower, "You are very careful here."

"Obliged to be," said the man. "Pass on to the house."

He walked across the court-yard, and going into the house, saw Mistress Gifford and Alice seated at the fire in deep grief.

"I am come to bring you good news," said Phil.

"Of my husband?" said Mary.

"Yes," replied Phil.

"Is he alive and well?" said Alice. "Oh pray—pray tell us."

"He is alive and well, but bruised and a little hurt; he has slept well all night."

"You are telling the truth?" said Alice.

"Yes," said Phil; "I thought you mightn't trust me, so I brought these things to shew," and he handed them several of the things of which Gifford had been plundered.

"Where is he? can we go to him?" asked Mary; "pray take us."

"I have come here at great risk, and to tell you only that he is alive, and that when he can write he will tell you all that has happened to him. You are to ask me no questions."

Mary and Alice were still in doubt what to do, now begging Phil to tell them where Gifford was, and then asking him to take them wherever he might be, when one of the soldiers took hold of Phil, and said he would shoot him if he didn't tell, and keep him, if he did, until the Captain was safe home again.

Phil said doggedly, "So this is the wage you give me for risking my life to tell you your husband's safe and well, Mistress Gifford. I thought Master Gifford's word was good for—"

"Yes," said Alice, "you shall never be hurt here; you shall go as you came: only promise me, if you can help my father, you will."

"Young lady, I'll stand by him for life or death."

The soldier released Phil, but by his looks shewed that he thought mercy much out of place, and a halter the most fit neckerchief for Phil.

"No, I didn't," said Will, sneeringly: "when they takes one, they won't leave t'other behind."

"Maybe," said Jack; and going to the fire, he offered to help with the food. Nancy talked to him, without saying a word to Will, whom she really hated. At last they took their food, Nancy having taken good care that Gifford's should be as well served as possible. Westcomb Willy grumbled, and all at once missing Phil, asked where he was.

"He's gone out on his own affairs, and won't be home till night," said Nancy.

"And you know where he's gone to, I expect," said Will.

"Yes, I do, and if you'll wait until midnight, you'll know too," said Nancy.

"Is he gone to bring your men here, old Sir?" he said, turning to Gifford.

"No," said Gifford and Nancy, speaking at the same time.

"Well, then, unless you can tell me, I shan't wait for Tricky Tom to bring the horses, I shall go away as we settled, and I'll do the thing that's right by all of us."

"No," said Jack, "you must wait until we see Phil again: he will go with us to-morrow."

"Very well," said Will; but he had already made his plans, and it did not suit him to say more. He thought that Jack would be out after mid-day, and that he could then, with Tricky Tom, carry off Gifford, who would be unable to resist.

After breakfast Gifford again spoke to Nancy of her ^{return} to God, and the wickedness of a life of plunder.

"Leave it, Nancy," he said, "and trust that God will provide for you."

"We don't want to live any longer here than we can help," said Nancy; "and they'll have to answer for it that drove us to it."

"No, no," said Gifford, "you will have to answer for it. And Jack," he said, "you had better be a soldier and serve your country than be hanged some day for killing a buck."

"And will you take me, Master Gifford?"

"I will send you to those that will," said Gifford: "but you must alter your life, hear the exhortations of the gifted Brethren, and repent of your bad life."

"I never did anything bad, Master Gifford."

"Then you don't think stopping a quiet man on the high road is bad?"

"Oh," said Jack, "but we have been hard put to it lately; since the war it's been hard work to live: we wanted a rich farmer to set us up like."

Westcomb Willy did not hear the conversation, but was afraid of some counterplot, so he said, "Jack, what are you talking about there with the old 'un?'"

"Oh, he's given us a bit of a sermon, Willy; and it would do you good."

"Is it a cure for the hangman?" said Willy; "that'll suit us both, Jack."

"Yes, it is," said Jack; "and it's a cure I mean to try before long."

"Peachin', I suppose," said Willy.

"You're always talking of peachin'," said Jack, "and it's my opinion that you would be the first man

to do such a dirty trick ; that it is, Master Will. But you do, and Phil will settle your hash."

" If I give him a chance," said Will, looking impudently at Nancy, who turned away in disgust.

Willy had now to contrive to get Jack away, and he knew that he could manage Tricky Tom, who was expected every moment. He therefore agreed at once to the plan that he understood Phil Clarkson had arranged, and proposed that Jack should go over the ground by which they had brought Gifford, and see if any one was on the look out, while he would go and meet Tricky Tom, and tell him not to bring the horses until the next day : in order to appear quite fair, he left the cave and promised that he would bring in something fresh for supper. Nancy was glad of his absence at any rate, for she was always afraid if he only chanced to be for a few minutes alone with her, and all her influence over him did not prevent his abusing Phil, and expressing his hatred towards him ; when he was gone she said, " Now, Master Gifford, that man's gone, I have less fear for you. He's up to any mortal thing that's bad."

" And yet you must consort with such," said Gifford, " while you lead this wicked life. Leave it, in God's holy Name; take to some honest ways, and you will yet have His blessing. He willeth not the death of a sinner."

Nancy went silently about her work, and Jack left the cave, saying he would be back for dinner, and that he would take a line in case any fish should fall in his way. Westcomb Willy had in the mean time hastened, at the top of his speed, to find Tricky Tom, and as he

was working against time, he hastened on, regardless of any consequences : every bush seemed to obstruct him as he took short cuts through the forest ; and then, when he came to the lane end, neither Tom nor the horses were there. He almost tore his flesh with rage ; he stamped, called himself a fool and Tom a knave, and was on the point of going back to the cave, when he fancied he heard the sound of horses' feet. He was in agony, for if they got the horses they would have to drag them through the wood near to the cave, and then force Gifford out of the cave : or else deceive both Nancy and him by some false tale. After waiting minutes that seemed hours, Tricky Tom came on slowly, leading two horses and riding a third.

" You take it easy, Tom," said Willy.

" Always do, my boy," was the ready answer ; " and there's no hurry before night. I didn't expect a message from Phil for the next two hours."

" Well, let me mount, and we can talk as we go ; for we must get back to the cave in an hour, or it's all up with us. Phil's gone off, and the old 'un and Nance were so civil that I fancy he's gone to get the money for himself and to leave us all in the lurch."

" Phil Clarkson wouldn't go to do that," said Tom ; " he's right, if any man is."

" You all seem so fond of Phil," said Will ; " but I won't trust him ; and more than that, if you like the job, we'll carry the old fellow to Winchester, and share the plunder ; they'll pay well for him, because he killed the Colonel and attacked Trevor House."

" And what will Phil say ?"

" Oh, hang Phil, I say," said Willy ; " he shall

never see me again, if I can get the money. He may look out for himself; he always gets the biggest share of everything."

"But he keeps us when there's nothing doing. I don't like to steal a march on him, and yet I am plaguy short of rhino."

Willy saw his opportunity. "It's now or never," said he; "so come along."

They hurried along, and at length got near to the old haunt, and having tied up the horses, they walked to the cave, where they found Gifford and Nancy alone. He was talking to her, as he always would to others, of the miseries of a bad life, and the blessed hope of rest beyond the grave.

"Preachin' again, old fellow?" said Willy, as he entered the cave.

"Yes, in season and out of season," said Gifford. "I shall preach while I live."

"Well, Nance will hear no more of it: you must come with us, and that directly; our orders are to take you away."

"And who gave those orders?" said Nance. "Phil said Master Gifford was not to move until he came back, and he shan't go for none of you."

"Nance, let's have no quarrelling," said Willy; "there's Tom and I have our orders, and Master Gifford's to go, quietly if he likes, and if not—"

"If not, what?" said Nancy.

Willy's look was answer enough. It spoke all the demon within him. Nancy thought to gain time.

"Wait," said she, "until Jack comes back. He will be here for dinner, and let's hear what he has to say."

"Come along, old Sir," said Tom ; and Willy nodded to him to say it was all right : Gifford, prepared for all things, rose quietly to go.

Nancy rose to interfere, and said he should not go, and that if Gifford went she would go with him ; she cried, and then, in a paroxysm of rage, threw herself at the mouth of the cave.

Westcomb Willy was not to be moved ; he drew her away, and Tom then led Gifford into the opening and thrust him forward. He crept on, until he came to the light, which almost blinded him, and knowing that it was useless to try to escape, he stood until they were joined by Westcomb Willy, who had struck Nancy a blow that stunned her, and then had rushed out of the cavern, resolving to go there no more, unless it were to fulfil his threat of breaking up the nest. There was no time for delay : so hastening Gifford on, Tricky Tom on one side and Willy on the other dragged him as they best could to the place where the horses were tethered, and then putting him on the worst horse and tying his feet, they led the way and struck rapidly into bye-roads to avoid observation or pursuit ; once away from the woods, they knew that neither Jack nor Phil could pursue, as they had no horses, and would probably miss them on the road if they found means of pursuit. After a ride of two hours, they slackened their pace, and began to talk of a place for getting something to eat. Tom told Will of a house on their road, about an hour's journey further, where, if they told a good story, they could get plenty, as the man was a cavalier, and very zealous in the King's cause ; it was resolved to represent Gif-

ford as a prisoner of war being conveyed to Winchester Castle. It was upwards of three hours after they left the cave ere they reached the 'Robin Hood,' and enquired if they could be accommodated with food, and safe custody for a Puritan captain.

"Yes," said the landlord, "and a halter too, for as many crop-heads as you can bring;" forthwith he assisted with zeal and interest to unbind Gifford and convey him to the house.

"You are old for a traitor," said he to Gifford; "I should have thought that your grey hairs might have taught you more wisdom."

"And I," said Gifford, "that they would have obtained me more respect from a younger man."

The innkeeper was silent, for he was not without feeling; he saw how evidently superior Gifford was to the fellows who had charge of him, and did what he could to make him comfortable, and to provide him with dinner. Both Tom and Will drank hard, but they could only stay for an hour to rest the horses, then they again started with their prisoner, taking the high road, as they knew that the cavaliers held the road, and that they were secure. Gifford asked them to take him to London, and promised them a large reward, and that if they came to any harm he would suffer rather than they should be injured: but Willy was too much afraid: he had carried off Gifford contrary to Phil's orders; he had injured him in every way, and could not believe that any promise would be kept; he thought that he was safe to get the reward, because it was offered by proclamation, and could not be refused: so he concluded

that he would go to Winchester, and thither he pursued his way.

Gifford did not give way to any unmanly complainings ; he understood the characters of the men who had him in their power, and rightly concluded that they were capable of any deed, even the baseness of taking blood-money, they were certain that the captain would be tried, and condemned too, for treason and rebellion. It was nearly midnight when they first saw Winchester Cathedral, and the chimes had already struck the hour before they arrived at the Castle gateway. They were admitted to the guard-room as soon as they had stated their business, and brought in the prisoner, but the officer of the guard declined to awake his superiors, and told Westcomb Willy that he must come again in the morning.

" And we'll bring Gifford with us too," said Willy.

" No, no," said the officer ; " leave him."

" I want the reward for the man," said Willy.

" Hah !" said the officer, " you can wait for the blood-money, you villain.—I must unfortunately detain you, Sir," said he to Gifford, " if it be a misfortune to rid you of such companions." Saying this, he called a servant to take Gifford to his room and to give him food, and then to remove him to a room in the Castle ; and turning away from Willy and Tricky Tom, with the word ' villains' on his lips, he walked out of the guard-room.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Jack returned to the cave, he was surprised to see Nancy lying on the floor; he called to her, but she made him no answer; then he looked, and saw that she had received a violent blow, and he thought that she had been killed. Gifford, too, was gone. Had he or his companions tracked Phil, and after taking him prisoner, struck Nancy, and taken Gifford away? But then there were no marks of any scuffle, and he knew enough of both Tom and Willy to suspect foul play at their hands. Leaving Nancy for a moment, he lit a torch to examine the wound more closely, then fancying that she breathed, he got some water and continued bathing her face, until at length she shewed signs of life. After a time she sat up, and recognising Jack, she said, "Where is he?"

"Who?" asked Jack; "who, Nance?"

"Master Gifford. Will and Tom took him, and because I cried and said he should not go, Will hit me a terrible blow, and I don't remember anything. My head aches,—my poor head," she said, and then relapsed into silence.

Jack did not know what to do, and therefore waited quietly, hoping every hour that Phil would return; but the hours seemed very long, and although Nancy had recovered, she was still weak, and when it was long past sunset Jack sat near the entrance to the cave watching for Phil's approach. At last he heard

his whistle, and going up to him, told him what had happened, cautioning him not to alarm Nancy, as she was very weak.

"Go in first, Jack," said Phil, hardly able to speak, "and tell her I'm coming."

Jack did as he was bid; and heartily glad Phil was, for when she saw him she fainted, and lay for some time as one dead.

"If ever I catch Willy he shall die for this," said Phil; "wherever I find him I'll kill him as I would any dog, if I hang for it the next moment."

"He must be a villain," said Jack, "to half kill a woman that has fed and sheltered him when he was running for his life."

"He'll come to no good," said Phil; "but he'll keep out of our way."

"Yes, and peach on us if he gets a chance. He's often said that he would break up the nest," replied Jack.

When Nancy came to herself, she begged Phil to leave the cave, and to go right away from Batcombe and its neighbourhood. "We shall never do any good. Master Gifford said truly that sooner or later evil would overtake us, I think that even now we are not far from trouble,—Westcomb Willy can bring the constables on us any hour."

"He knows better," said Phil; "he knows me too well to face me."

"Yes," said Nancy, "to face you, but not to set the bull-dogs of the law upon us."

"Where can we go, Nance?" said Phil. "Everybody knows me for miles round, and there isn't a chance for me,—is there, Jack?"

"No," said Jack: "but for all that, I'd go. I won't forsake you, Phil, but if you go away I will go and serve the King; for there isn't much work that I care to do."

Nancy prepared supper, though feeble, and it was very late before they lay down to rest. Phil told his wife how well the Giffords had behaved to him, shewing Nancy the money which had been given him. "I would have let him go, as I am a living man I would, Nancy; and I'd have given all this money to the other three: but it's of no use now; if for downright wickedness Will has not killed him, he has taken him to Winchester; there is not a chance for the poor old man."

Nancy cried very bitterly. "Pray, Phil, go,—pray, Phil, leave this place! the money you have got will keep us until we get far enough away, and I would go a hundred miles now at this moment, if I could be sure never to come here again."

"Well, Nance, you are a brave girl; you have borne this life for me many years, and you shall have your turn."

"God bless you, Phil," said Nance; "but when shall we go? for I cannot rest here; I fancy every moment that I see Will coming here."

"To-morrow morning we will go, Nancy; let us now take our last rest here; neither Tom nor Will can reach us to-night, they are too busy on their errand; and I wish it may lead both of them to a halter. Good-night, Nance," said Phil; and he was soon sleeping soundly.

Not so Nancy; she was too glad to sleep, and too excited; it was long before she dozed, and then it was

to dream of the old house on the common ; then to wake, and dream again, until she started up suddenly, and saw Phil taking down the guns, and packing away useful and light things for an early flight.

When Nancy rose, "Come, girl," he said, "let us have a good meal, for it's the last we shall take here ; I am just about to pack up, and to leave a little present for any kind friend that may try to break up our nest ; I dare say the right man will get it."

Jack laughed ; he did not quite understand what Phil meant to do, but he was quite sure that he would be even with Will ; it was his cleverness that had made him leader in the forest, and a sort of king of the outlaws.

Nancy was never more busy : she made a savoury dish, and baked some meat to carry away in their wallets ; got out all the bread and toasted it afresh, and then brought out some beer.

Phil and Jack were merry, and poor Nancy was quite cheerful ; she ate heartily, saying at each mouthful it was her happiest meal ; but every now and then Phil laughed so loudly that Nancy said, "What's up, Phil ? what's up ?"

" You shall see, girl,—you shall see ! "

They sat long over the meal, and when Phil got up he flung his stool into the fire. Nancy said, " Why are you burning the stools ? "

" Who wants 'em, Nance ? only villains now know where to find them, and any how, they shall have only one little present from Old Phil, or Old File, as they sometimes call me ; they won't peach twice on us. Hah ! hah ! I will shew them how to smoke out

rabbits;" and another stool went into the fire, and then another, until Nancy said, "It's so hot that we cannot bear it long."

"Nor we don't want to it;" and saying this, Phil began to destroy everything in the cave, and to pile up a quantity of strong timber against the outlet. Having done this, he began to carry out all that they intended to keep, Jack giving him a ready hand, and waiting to see what he called the final touch. The guns were carried out, one still remained: "Shall I take it?" said Jack.

"No," said Phil, "not yet. Is all out?"

"Yes," said Nancy. "I have got all my clothes on, and tied up my kit, and there's enough for two days' food, eat as much as we will."

"Well!" said Phil; and he began to damp down the fire, and then, with Jack, to lay some old skins near it, and to cut some fresh skins into strips: he then tied them across a frame-work, and loading the gun to the muzzle, he primed it well, put in a new flint, and tied the trigger to the centre of the frame.

"Now, Jack," said he, "just look at my snare for a fox."

"Eh!" said Jack: "let me see."

"He looks in; all's quiet: he creeps on, and pushes against the ropes, and bang goes the gun, and has him. Now, Jack, go," said Phil, "and don't tell Nance, for it's a ticklish job to set the snare." It was some time before Phil came out, and when he did he laughed and skipped about until Nancy said he was mad with joy at leaving. Only one thing more remained to be done, and that was to plug up the chimney,

and to remove a few marks well known to the foresters. This done, the three left the cave, and took the shortest way that led them on the high road to the north. The morning was cloudy, and when they started neither felt much inclined to talk. Phil said that they must walk at least twenty miles that day, and get away from any one who would know them. He had taken many precautions to avoid being known before he left the forest, and Jack said they would not know one another in a strange town; but Nancy, always anxious, said she should know Phil anywhere, and so would the justices if they caught him; but he had so far escaped them, and she hoped that he was safe. About eleven o'clock the day cleared up, and Nancy proposed a halt, and a seat by the road-side to eat some of the venison, and to lighten her load. The men were very willing, and passed some good jokes during their meal, which they ended by offering the remains of that to a beggar, Phil telling him he fared like a lord. Then starting forward, they resolved not to halt until they could rest for the night; and Nancy, silencing every feeling of fatigue by a strong will, determined that she would never propose a halt until they had placed a hundred miles between themselves and their old habitation. "They shall not know us, Phil; and whether we be converted or not, as Master Gifford talks about, we will try and lead honest lives."

"It's very hard to be honest," said Phil, "when every man calls 'rogue' after you; there's many the time it's made me a thief out of spite, because it seemed as if all the world were agin me."

"They hurt us mainly," said Nance, "when they

turned us off the common ; I could have gone to death with you then, Phil, and many times since.”

“ Aye, aye, girl,” said Phil.

Jack sung and whistled, now and again asking Nancy if she would hear the old forest song ?

“ No more, no more,” said Nancy. So talking and walking, the twenty miles were passed over, and then another mile before they reached the little road-side inn where they took up their lodgings for the night.

“ We haven’t paid for lodgings,” said Jack, “ for some time.”

“ No,” said Nancy, “ nor slept so far from a prison for many a long year.”

Phil laughed.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM the moment that Phil Clarkson had left the Grange, Alice had tried by every means to hear news of her father. He was alive, and she did not think likely to suffer any harm from the man she had seen, one who had brought tidings of him to spare their suffering. She sent a second messenger to Lisle, begging him to exert his influence with the Parliamentarians to discover her father, and to obtain his liberty by offering to exchange him for any of the King’s officers then in London. Lisle readily complied with Alice’s request, and sent down one of his men to see if any tidings could be obtained as to any suspected persons. Mr. Wentworth had called at the Grange to condole with Mary Gifford and her daughter ; and, while la-

menting the course which Gifford had pursued, promised that if he could obtain any clue to his place of concealment, he would at once inform them. Some of the people said that they had missed the foresters for a week or more, but then, they were sometimes hid away for a month or two, and they could have no motive to take anybody prisoner, and if they knew of the reward offered by proclamation for the arrest of Gifford, they were not likely men to ask for or to get it.

Many were inclined to blame Mary for letting Phil Clarkson go, but she said that he came from her husband, and under the protection of his promise, and she knew him well enough to be assured that he would keep it, even if it cost him his life. When Lisle's man attempted to track Clarkson, he found that no one had seen him, although everybody knew him; they declared that he had never been caught, and never would be caught, and it was more than they would like to do to have any hand in putting friend or foe on Phil's track. He was a good friend, but he left his marks on his enemies, and they knew it. All attempts in the neighbourhood were fruitless; it was owing to the villainy of Westcomb Willy that Alice at last discovered where her father was.

We must now return to the party at Winchester.

When Willy left the guard-house, he said, "Tom, I'll lay any money the fellows won't pay, but I'll go to-morrow, and have another try; we can't lose anything by trying.

"Unless they know us," said Tom; "I can tell you, I shall give Winchester a wide berth for many a long day."

"We can go to the 'Black Bull,' they know me there, and won't do me a bad turn; we can sell old Gifford's horse, and if you will give me half the horse-money, I'll go to London, and see what offers there. I'll not go without trying it on, and if I can't sell the old crop-head, I'll peach on Phil, and turn up his den. I hate him; he's so saucy like, and thinks he knows everything; but I can teach him a thing or two."

"It's hard to say that, Will; I have know'd Phil Clarkson, on and off, seven years, and he never did any man an ill turn, unless he cut up nasty; I wouldn't be in your shoes, no, nor in any man's that Phil owed any mortal thing to; he'd pay 'em, to a penny."

"He owes me enough," said Will.

"What for?" said Tricky Tom.

"Well, he ordered Gifford to be kept, as you know; and as you don't know, I'll tell you—I knocked Nance on the head."

"Well, you are the devil's own child," said Tom, "to hurt a woman that has fed you and hid you many's the day, when a word would have made you dance the slack rope; and she didn't like you, neither."

"I know it, I know it," said Willy; "but come, let's to the 'Black Bull,' and to-morrow, if you sell the horse, we'll share."

Upon this arrangement they went to the "Black Bull." Tom was well known, for he spent his money freely; and there was no difficulty in finding beds, nor in selling Gifford's horse for little more than half its real worth. The landlord did a little business in

the horse line, and, like most of the class, did not consider honesty any part of his calling.

It was late in the morning before Westcomb Willy awoke, and then it was to very unpleasant reflections. He did not like to go to the Castle, for fear of being seized upon for some of his many crimes; but there was no getting Tricky Tom to go, he therefore set out to try his luck. When he got to the guard-room and named his business, he was little noticed. He saw one man after another go in to the officer in command, and a deserter tied up and flogged. At last he went in: on being asked what he came for, he said he was come for the reward offered for bringing in Captain Gifford, a traitor.

"And you are the fellow who did that business?" said the officer.

"Yes, Sir," said Will; "I may say, almost by myself."

"It's a thing to be proud of," said the officer.

"Yes, Sir," said Tom; "he was a very busy man about Batcombe."

"And what are you?" said the officer.

"I, Sir?" said Will; "I?"

"Yes, you," said the officer, sharply.

"I sell horses."

"And men too, when you can catch them."

"Yes, I suppose it is so, Sir," said Will; "but I'm badly off; I've had nothing to-day, Sir."

"And nothing will you get here. We shall keep Captain Gifford, as you call him, but you must find those who offered the reward. We pay nothing, I can tell you. So off, unless you want the cats."

Will slunk away, angry with everybody, and saying that he was paid out for taking the old fellow from Phil. On his return he told Tom of his ill luck, and persuading him to take only a third of the money for Gifford's horse, they breakfasted together, and then parted company ; Tom to try his fortunes in London, and Will to go back again to Batcombe, where he had a scheme for turning his ill-fortune into money. He proposed to himself to return to Batcombe Grange, to tell the Giffords where the Captain was, and persuade them that it was under Phil Clarkson's orders they had taken him to Winchester ; and thus combining revenge with his anxiety for money, he proposed to lead Gifford's men to the cave, and to betray Phil and Jack. There appeared to be everything to favour this plan ; and Gifford could not be got out of prison for some time. Will had no sooner sketched out his plan, than he resolved to put it into execution ; before midnight he was within ten miles of Batcombe, which he proposed to visit early on the following morning. Meanwhile he embellished his story, and went to sleep at the inn, where he was well known.

The morning broke with threatenings of a storm ; the clouds were hurried along by the wind, and the dead branches crackled as they broke from the trees and strewed the paths. Will was by no means pleased with the prospect of his journey, and took a long pull at the beer-can before he ventured to leave the inn. He thought over his story, and it seemed to him a very likely one to deceive the Giffords, and he calculated that he was first as to time in giving any cer-

tain intelligence of him. He therefore walked rapidly, and found himself about eight o'clock at the drawbridge of Batcombe Grange. He was asked his business, and when he said that he came from Captain Gifford, found very little difficulty in obtaining access to Mary Gifford and her daughter. When Willy was brought into the great hall, he was hardly allowed to speak.

"Is my father alive?" asked Alice.

"Is my husband living and well?" asked Mary.

"He is, and a prisoner in Winchester Castle. I took him there myself, and gave him up safely to the officer there," said Willy.

"How could you be so cruel?" said Mary; "I would have given you all the money we had, to have had him here."

"I wish I had done it," said Will; "but Phil Clarkson made me carry him to Winchester."

"And was that the man who came here?" said Alice.

"Likely enough," said Will; "he has face enough to go anywhere, and devil enough in him to do any man harm. I took your father away as quick as I could, to save his life."

"But we gave him money," said Mary, "and a Bible for the Captain. Did he get nothing?"

"Nothing at all," said Will; "he bid me come and tell you where he was, and promised me a good reward."

"And you shall have it, good man," said Mary. "We hoped that the man who had come to us, and brought us a note, would have been a friend

to my poor husband, but he must have deceived us."

"He would deceive any saint," said Will; "he could talk so clever: and he was, for all that, cruel, and as bad as could be."

"Do you think he was cruel to my husband?" said Mary.

"I know he was," said Will. "He took him, and brought him to the cave. I was one under him, but we did as he told us."

"Could you take us to the cave?" said Mary.

"If I was paid as well as Phil was, I could," said Will.

Mary went to a box, and taking out some gold, gave it, and promised more if he would take two of her men to the cave, and shew them where her husband had been. Alice said she would also go.

"I will not go with two, but I will with four, if the young woman will keep out of sight until we catch Phil and his wife."

"Had the man a wife?" said Mary; "and could any woman abuse a man like Gifford? The Lord have mercy on us; we live in evil times. You had better not go, Alice, for who can tell what may happen, and the day is very stormy."

Alice begged hard to go, and four of the trustiest men, heavily armed, being soon ready, Will was told that if he did as he promised he should be amply rewarded. It seemed a very good beginning for Will; he had been well fed, and got money, and he had a promise of more; yet he did not like to face Phil: he had injured him too deeply to expect any forgiveness,

and, of course, he must creep into the cave first; but then he could do it cautiously, and see if anything was wrong.

When they set out the wind had not abated, and before they reached the forest Alice was obliged to be left at a farm-house, and the men insisted that they would press on without her; she unwillingly consented, because she saw that she delayed their progress. Will cautioned them as to Phil's great strength and activity.

"We have fought with Colonel Trevor's men, and are not afraid of any of you," said one of the men.

They found the way through the forest very difficult, and the storm shook the trees to their very roots; they saw many of the old trees uprooted, and only their anxiety to find any tidings of their master induced them to press on. At last they came to the place which indicated the road to the cave; the mark was gone, and Will was at fault.

"I see how it is," said he; "Phil knows I shall be on his tracks, and he has made up his mind to deceive me; but it will not do."

For a long time Will was at fault, and could not find any traces of the entrance of the cave; the rain fell in torrents, and the men began to think that they were deceived.

"Come," said one, "let's have no more nonsense; if you know, tell us; and if not, let us go."

"I shall find it," said Will. "Many's the hundred times I have been there, but then we always had certain stone marks, and they are all moved, so that they deceive me." At last Will called out, "Here it is;"

and shouting "Phil Clarkson!" he hoped to see Phil come out of the cave. All was silent, and Will went to the chimney, which he knew; there was a stone on it.

"They are gone," said Will, "or up to something."

Presently a thin line of smoke curled up the chimney, and Will could not tell what to make of it. He asked one of the men to listen, and for five minutes all were silent; they heard only the howlings of the tempest, and felt only the pelting rain, which drenched them to the skin.

"This is no use," said one of the men; "now, master, you try the mouth of the cave; I'll watch here."

"But suppose Phil's there; he'll have my life, as sure as you stand there. He must have heard us, and he may be now covering us with a rifle."

"You have brought us here," said the man, "and unless you shew us the way into the cave, you go to Batcombe, and then to London, where you will swing for betraying our Captain."

"Give me a knife and a pistol," said Will, "and you try the chimney, as if going to get down it, and I'll wait a bit, and then quietly get up the tunnel and listen."

The men did as they were bid, and tore away much of the chimney lining, hearing now and then great stones fall on the hearth, each followed by a shower of sparks. They then thought that Phil and his companions were in the cave. Will waited, for he had a presentiment of coming evil. At length he went in and listened: he could only hear the falling stones. Presently he got to the frame. "There is something

up," he said, and cutting the skins with his knife, he tried to pull the framework out. One small piece of tough hide only held the trigger, and the sudden wrench caused a tremendous explosion. The gun had burst, and shattered Will's head to pieces, blowing one portion of his body to the mouth of the cave.

"He's determined to hold out," said the men, and rushing to the cave's mouth they saw that their guide was blown to pieces. Phil Clarkson's snare for foxes had destroyed a thorough villain.

As it was useless to try to go any further without tools, the men agreed to mark the trees through the forest, and to return immediately to tell Alice of the ill success of their mission. They therefore turned their steps to the farm-house, and found Alice waiting impatiently for any news of her father which they could bring. The horrible intelligence of Will's death without any hand being seen only convinced her the more of Phil Clarkson's courage and wickedness. She begged help from the farm, and the men set out with shovels and axes, resolving to dig up the cave, and enter from the roof. They had so cleverly marked their route, that it was an easy matter to return, and they saw that there were no marks of any footsteps but their own round the chimney. So while two men stood with loaded pistols ready to fire into the cave if any one appeared, the others worked with pick and shovel, and in less than an hour it was an easy matter to see a little into the condition of the cave,—which was in utter confusion. One of the men volunteered to descend, and calling out to his comrades that all appeared to be right, they sent two more men down

with a rope, and having taken up a brand from the smouldering ashes, they kindled a fire, to see more easily into the recesses of the cave. It had been evidently inhabited very lately, how lately they could not tell, and then leisurely evacuated. The portions of the discharged gun were scattered in every direction. They had now to look for Will, and he was drawn out almost blown to pieces; but it was agreed to leave him in the cave. The leather tied to the trigger of the gun shewed that Phil Clarkson had expected to be betrayed, and had provided against it.

When Alice again saw the men returning, she asked if they had any tidings of anything belonging to her father, and finding that nothing was left in the cave, and that Clarkson had provided against any pursuit, she returned home late to her mother, resolving to send to Lisle all the particulars of her father's capture, as gleaned from Clarkson and Will; and she sat up the greater part of the night preparing for the departure of a messenger at break of day. She begged Lisle to send to Winchester and to get a safe conduct for herself and her mother, adding that, if permitted, they would gladly share her father's prison, and fulfil their duties to him. Having finished her letters, Alice threw herself on her bed, and, worn out with fatigue, was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN the messenger arrived with the letter from Alice, Lisle was prevented from going to Batcombe Grange by the urgency of political affairs, but he sent immediately to the General in command, begging him to claim the Captain as a prisoner of war, and to offer an exchange for him. Fairfax promised that it should be done, and sent immediately to the Castle at Winchester. He received for reply that Gifford's commission could not be recognised; he was detained for treason, and for procuring the death of Colonel Trevor, an officer in the King's service. To this Fairfax replied that the Parliamentary commissions must obtain the same respect as the King's, or he should be obliged to retaliate; and it would be very painful to him to deprive many gentlemen of the privileges which their commissions, rather than their characters, obtained them; that Captain Gifford had been merciful in victory, sparing Trevor House from plunder, and receiving wounded men into his own house. This remonstrance procured for Gifford the treatment of a prisoner of war, and although they promptly returned a refusal to an offer of exchange for an officer of superior rank, he was allowed to write to his wife and daughter, and assure them of his safety, and that Lisle was at work for him; he also told them to be kind to Phil Clarkson, who, he said, had behaved kindly, and would, he thought, have brought him back to the Grange, had not two others

of the gang carried him away by force, and brought him to his prison-house.

When Alice read her father's letter to her mother, she was grieved to see how pale her countenance became.

"I shall never see your father again, Alice," said she; "but tell him—tell him—" and tottering, she would have fallen had not a servant caught her in her arms. Alice was shocked, but she neither shrieked nor cried. She ran immediately for some hartshorn, and then sent for the doctor; who was with her after an hour's earnest watching.

"It is a fit," he said, "and she may never recover it; the shock has been too great for her to bear. She is not so strong as she was."

"No," said Alice; "she has had much trouble for some time. But do you not think she will speak again?"

"Probably not," said the doctor. "I will do what is best for her, but the end is not in our hands."

"No, no," said Alice; "and I will try to say, God's will be done."

When the surgeon left, Alice began to review her position. Her father in prison, and without any prospect of release; her mother speechless, and probably a helpless invalid for the rest of her days. She knelt down, and prayed fervently for the guidance of a kind Providence, and was not long before she found relief, and even comfort. "I shall not be left alone," she said: and she had not long left her mother's room, when Mr. Wentworth called, and saying that he had heard of her affliction, offered his house as her

home until some of her friends could come to her assistance. He then went to Mary Gifford's room, and offered up the prayers for the sick, shewing all his former kindness to Alice. She then told him of her engagement to Lisle, of her intention to write to him, and beg of him to obtain some expression of her father's wishes as to the farm, and to tell him that her mother was very ill and unable to write. Alice hoped for a time to conceal the truth in its fullest extent; she was without hope, but how could she write this to a father in prison.

On receipt of the letter, Lisle sent again to Gifford, and said if he could get a pass he would come to him; but as it involved delay, he begged for his consent to his marriage with Alice, that he might have some claim, as her lawful protector, to look after her interests.

Gifford's reply was frank,—that he had long looked on Lisle as his son, and that he left everything in his hands. He suggested, if it could be done, that his wife should go to London, and the farm be let. He said that, as to the Grange being of any use now, it was rather the reverse, and that Lisle would understand how to act.

Lisle, immediately on the receipt of this letter, applied for an escort, and set out for the Grange. He knew enough of the King's party to despise the bad management which prevailed in their councils; but he knew that there were villains roving through the country ready to get money at any cost, and from any party. He resolved, therefore, to run no risk, especially as he seemed to be the only person who

could help Gifford or relieve Alice from her numerous difficulties. On setting out from town he heard rumours of the advance of a body of the King's troops, but they were soon discovered to be false. The King's cause was becoming every day weaker, and each month strengthened the Parliamentarians, and gave them, what they most needed, confidence in their leaders and in the ultimate success of their cause. The journey was almost without any incident, except it was that they stopped at the house where Carlyon had obtained the cavalier's despatches, and heard from Boniface how cleverly the hater of all crop-heads had been shorn.

And Lisle was once more a guest at the Grange; but from the first moment that he entered the doors he felt that he had come to a house of mourning. The men were ready to wait upon him; his horse was taken from him; and Alice ran to meet him, but it was with so full a heart that she burst into tears, and fell into his arms. She recovered herself immediately, and replied to Lisle's gentle words with her usual quiet manner.

"I am very foolish," she said, "not to control myself; but I could not see you without thinking of my poor father, and feeling bitterly my mother's sad condition."

"And is she any better?" said Lisle.

"I think not; sometimes we think that she knows us, and then she sinks back as if overpowered with the emotion of trying to utter something; and then," Alice said, the tears running down her cheeks, "it is sad to see her."

Lisle asked if he might see her, and Alice said she was very desirous that he should, and led him to her mother's room. At first she did not appear to know him, but as the mind seemed to assume its sway, she smiled at him, and looked at her daughter as if commanding her to his care; then she again relapsed, and did not notice anything that was passing around her.

Lisle then spoke of Gifford, and said that he had secured for him the few privileges of a prisoner of war; but he could not see him, for there was not time to get a pass, and to go to Winchester without was putting his head into the lion's mouth.

"They will not hurt my father?" said Alice.

"No," said Lisle, "we have too many of their side in our hands for him to be in danger, at least in greater danger than we are all in."

"And are you in danger?"

"Yes, Alice, our lives are every day in jeopardy. The contest is no longer what it was, whether the Parliament shall exist, and perform legal functions; they are now the sovereign power, and the contest is one of life and death, for whoever conquers, it will only be bloodshed, and the destruction of all the leaders."

Alice sighed. "These are bad times, Lisle," she said; "times that none of us could foresee."

"It is a great struggle for liberty, Alice. The court is profligate; French manners, French religion, and French licentiousness are everywhere; and the nobility as selfish a race as ever disgraced a nation."

"But some of them are good," said Alice; "and I hear that many act with the Parliament."

"I do not trust them, Alice. Some are secretly hoping to use us to help them to a crown; but there is one man who will outplot them all, and even Essex will not be able to stand before him."

"And who is that?" enquired Alice, eagerly.

"You do not know him. It is one of the Huntingdon Cromwells, Oliver by name; a clear-headed man, who is profoundly imbued with religious feeling, and disciplines his troops to hear prayers and sermons daily. He is personally brave, and withal very clever in council. He says little, but always speaks to the purpose, and pushes the King's party to extremes."

"But what will be the end? will the King allow Cromwell to rule in his name, and make him a peer?" asked Alice.

"He is already too great for the King to do anything for him, and he knows that the palace is a falling house."

"And you would not like to say more," said Alice, "would you?"

"No," said Lisle, "I should not like to express what I feel of the calamities that must fall on some heads."

"Not on my father's, or on yours, I hope," said Alice.

"I cannot say where," said Lisle; "but the present advisers of the King counsel him in extreme measures, and advise him to treat us, when conquered, as rebels; and while we know all that passes in the royal presence, the King only knows the opinions of a few of our chief men; he is ignorant of the real inten-

tions of the strongest minds. But we must leave this subject, Alice, and think what is to be done with the Grange. It is clearly useless now as a position for our recruits ; and, since the fall of Trevor House, we have been so strong about here, that I think it would be as well to let the farm, and to remove your mother."

" Could she bear the removal ?" said Alice. " That we must go hence, and speedily, I know, for I cannot manage for all, although the men are kind, and help me in many ways that I did not expect."

" True," said Lisle, " but your father feels, and I know, that the demands on your strength would be more than you could bear. There would be a great loss if the farm had to be sold."

Alice said, " I am quite prepared to do what my father wishes, and have already begun to get everything I could into order. The men you had selected from among the labourers are going away with your escort, and then there only remains to let the farm and sell the cattle."

" And what will Alice do ?" said Lisle.

Alice smiled, and said, " I shall have my duties, and they must be near one parent or other, or with both, if God wills ; and if not, where I can do most, even if it be in a prison."

" And will not Alice share my home, if it is her parents' home too ?"

" Yes," said Alice ; " I have no greater earthly pleasure than to do my duty, and to please you, Lisle. You have been my father's friend, and my teacher, and I can never be worthy of your love."

"Alice, dear Alice," said Lisle, "there is ever a light shadow in the darkest clouds: we will try and draw comfort from these sad hours. But time presses on us; we must act first, and reflect afterwards. May I see Mr. Wentworth to-morrow, and ask him to fix an early day for our wedding?"

"He has been very kind," said Alice, "and has done all he could for me in my trouble. He knows of our engagement."

"Then I may speak to him freely," said Lisle; "and I will ask him to find a tenant for the farm. He may, perhaps, prefer to find some Royalist; but we must not mind that."

"He does not, I think, know really who he can depend on," said Alice, "for there are many who change with success."

CHAPTER XVI.

LISLE's active disposition was felt throughout the Grange. He sent the escort away on the evening of his arrival, and thus cleared the household from the labour of providing for their wants, and at the same time he sent a few volunteers from among the farm labourers. They had been always half-soldiers, half-labourers at the Grange since the beginning of the troubles; and Lisle thought it better to let the house return to its former character. In the morning he went to Mr. Wentworth, and although received with coldness, yet Lisle felt that he was treated with re-

spect and kindness. He thanked the Rector for his attention to his friends, and was glad to find that Mr. Wentworth would marry him at any time he appointed.

"We have little time for preparations," said Lisle, "and in Alice Gifford's lone condition it is well that she should have protection."

"Yes," said Mr. Wentworth, "I do not know any house where the afflictions of the times have fallen more heavily than on the Grange, yet perhaps in all the struggle there is not a man more conscientious than Gifford, though most mistaken—most wonderfully wrong."

"We must not discuss these questions, Rector, I think," said Lisle, "although I can say that I am glad you understand my friend's, I would say, father's perfect sincerity of purpose."

"Most dangerously sincere," said Mr. Wentworth; "because he has given up all, ease, religious peace at home, property, and now liberty, and the reason, if not the life, of one who tenderly loved him."

Lisle was silent; he felt that Mr. Wentworth had said much that was painfully true; a few years seemed like an age of troubles.

Mr. Wentworth observing Lisle's silence said, "And will what he obtains be worth the cost? All history shews that political contests have ended in transferring power from one set of selfish vested interests to another; and he that to-day is very liberal of his neighbour's property, is to-morrow selfishly conservative of his own."

"But we hope, Mr. Wentworth, to make the law equal to all men. We think that the King has invaded

the liberties of the people in many ways. He has levied money without the authority of Parliament; once allow this, and you will find England to be like France, ruled only by despotic power."

"I do not think that the two countries can ever be compared," said Wentworth. "The manners of the people are different, they belong to races separated more widely by nationality than even by religious feeling; therefore no King would ever obtain the power over a reflecting people, that is obtained over a fickle and changeable nation."

"Our nobles are not slow to imitate the French," said Lisle, "and they will always lead the common people."

"Yes," said Wentworth, "they will lead them, but they do not lead the yeomanry, nor the traders sprung from them; they, as a class, have separate interests and feelings, and are now the strength of your army—certainly of Cromwell's."

"Doubtless it is so," said Lisle; "our first battles were lost because we had not any men equal in spirit to the King's party. But now we have men who equal, and many who excel them."

"I cannot see any hope for a peace," said Wentworth. "You feel your strength, and although it will cost England much blood and treasure to conquer the King's party, it will not bring peace or repose to the land."

"Perhaps not," said Lisle, "but already the Parliament has freed us from the Star Chamber, and the judges are appointed *quamdiu se bene gesserint* and '*durante bene placito*. Oppressed men have been sed, and monopolies lessened."

"And many tyrannical acts done by the Parliament," said Wentworth; "many deeds that will turn some day with tenfold vengeance on their authors."

"No, no, Mr. Wentworth; the exigencies of Parliament have been great, they have been obliged to mistrust great names; they have found the nation dragged into foreign wars to support a base minion of the court; and if we find it impossible to trust common men who lie and do not the truth, how shall we trust Princes?"

"We must not talk any further," said Wentworth; "we are on ground where we cannot agree; but I hope, since the war is removed from our neighbourhood, we shall live in peace."

"Yes," said Lisle; "we have no secret despatches now."

Mr. Wentworth coloured, and said, "No, but I have never concealed my anxiety to serve the Royalist cause, and I did what I thought my duty."

"True," said Lisle, "and I hope our revenge has not been unchristian. Let me advise you, Mr. Wentworth, not to run the same risk again. You owe it to that good man, Gifford, that your goods were left you in peace."

"I shall ever remember the kindness," said Wentworth; "I am quite aware that the village was in the hands of your troops, and has been mercifully dealt with."

They then talked over the plans for leaving the farm; Wentworth recommended a young man, the son of one of the farmers, who, he said, only minded his own business, first to carry on the farm, and then

to rent it. He was not sorry to look forward to a time when the very sounds of war would pass away from them.

A few days passed rapidly away, and Alice plighted her troth at the altar of Batcombe to John Lisle. It could not be a time of great festivity; even those bright dreams which usually gladden such hours were darkened by the present care of her sick mother and imprisoned father. And yet Alice felt pleasure in the thought that circumstances had allowed her to be married where father and mother had been joined in holy wedlock, and where she had long worshipped. As in all great periods of our life, much of past mingles with the present, so was it with Alice; she lived in a few minutes through many years of childhood and youth. There was not any alteration, except that it was another Rector who blessed her union, and a friend's, but not a father's hand which gave her in marriage. Many of the villagers gathered round the church, or assembled within its walls, to see their friend and benefactress married. Many were the blessings invoked upon Alice and Lisle, as they were obliged to remain at the church door to receive the greetings of those who had at the same time to take a last farewell. "You will come and see us some time, Mistress Alice," said one. "You will not leave Batcombe for good and aye," said another; and with kindly words and good wishes they walked back again to Batcombe Grange. A social meal followed, in which Mr. Wentworth gladly joined them, with some of his parishioners; and while it was difficult to meet without saying something of the state of the country,

they contrived to avoid even the appearance of disputing, they parted as men separated politically, yet with mutual respect and good feeling.

Only a few days after, Lisle was summoned to London. Several severe checks had much dispirited the Parliamentarians, and the moderate men were desirous to offer terms of peace. It was one of the evils of the times, that whenever either party obtained a success there were always ready advisers to avoid all compromise. Both parties felt the evil without being able to remedy it ; had the King been well advised, there were periods in the struggle when he might, with honour, have conciliated many of his enemies and disarmed others. Lisle was wanted to encourage the citizens, and to unite some of the moderate and extreme men, who were at times as hostile to each other as to the King. Alice was reluctant to part with Lisle, but when she found that it was of importance to her father's cause, she said,—

“I will not express even a wish to detain you. Go, and if, Lisle, you can see my father, try to alleviate his troubles, and tell him that I will do what I can to comfort my poor mother.”

It was evident to Lisle that Mary Gifford was sinking rapidly to her grave, and he resolved that he would return to Batcombe as soon as he saw any improvement in public affairs ; in which it seemed probable he would be called upon to take some leading part. But Cromwell's powerful mind was in the ascendant, whether present in Parliament or absent in fighting its battles. He kept the minds of men steadily to the end which he had in view,—the supremacy of the

Parliament over the King; concealing his ultimate thought, which was to be supreme over all, and, without the name, to wield a more than regal power. To this end he used all parties: the pure republicans, of whom John Lisle was one, hoped that Cromwell would establish a republic on a firm basis and then vacate the power to which his energy and resolute will had advanced him; at this time there seemed no probability that the numerous rivals for power would fall under the dominion of one man. But Lisle had many fears.

Among the Eastern Association, Cromwell was powerful by reason of his connections, and his conduct regarding the drainage of the Fen country; but he had triumphed in the north, and in the west, and every mouth was full of the deeds of Ironsides. Lisle began to fear that his friendship for Cromwell might lead him where he would not go, and he resolved to avoid the party strife, and to leave London.

Before his return he made strenuous efforts to obtain the liberty of Captain Gifford, but without success, and Lisle once more set out for the Grange, not sorry to rest from the contentions of party, and to be with one to whom he could speak with confidence that he would be understood. Alice welcomed Lisle, saying that if it was a sick house it was a peaceful home; that the labours of the farm had been renewed, and that she had enjoyed more repose than she had done for some time. She had heard from her father, who spoke of the opportunities which the gaol afforded him of doing good, and ministering to perishing souls. He did not fear but

that he would ultimately be released by an exchange of prisoners ; Alice said her chief anxiety was her mother, who appeared to be failing rapidly ; and it was not many days ere, supported by her child, and with Lisle by her side, she fell asleep, and passed from the world without a struggle. It was rest to Mary Gifford, but there was one far away to whom the intelligence would come as the filling up of the cup of earthly sorrows ; after many tears, and long looking on the calm face, smiling even in death, Alice said,—

“ My father, my poor father ; and who can tell it to him ? ”

“ I must,” said Lisle ; “ but how ? their separation must have prepared his mind, and her illness has been some warning. But it seems to me that all his desire for life will now be taken away.” This anxiety induced Lisle to suggest that they should leave the farm as soon as Mary Gifford was buried.

“ And I will go to my father,” said Alice ; “ yes, Lisle, I know you will let me go and comfort him ; and my intercessions may prevail where others have failed.”

A few days, those days of silence and sorrow which preceded the day of burial, were spent by Alice and Lisle in devotion, and in shaping out their future life. The London house was to be as simple as possible, and as devoid of ostentation ; and Alice fondly hoped that Lisle would never be separated from her so long as they lived. The last rites performed, Mr. Wentworth ministering, and Batcombe church and churchyard were parted from for many years ; but Alice did not forget

the service, for she never heard it again ; the hopes of a resurrection to life, and the committal of her mother's body to its last earthly resting-place, became the last connecting association between herself and the Church of her Fathers.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE sale of the stock, and leasing Batcombe Grange, occupied all the leisure time of Alice and Lisle. Captain Gifford had written to them on hearing of the death of his wife, and expressed a hope that they would spare him, if he ever was released, the pain of seeing the one place where he would feel alone in the world. He spoke of the mercies of God in finding him occupation among a race of men who seemed never to have known anything of God, unless it had been to blaspheme by His holy name. He thought that a time might arrive when he would sit by their fire-side in London, and with them read the word of God. He desired a few presents might be made among the poor who served the Lord, and said his pilgrimage at Batcombe was ended. Every wish was scrupulously attended to, and the greatest happiness to Alice was the fulfilment of her father's wishes, and hearing kindly words and grateful praises of him.

At length the hour came for her departure, when after many sorrowing farewells, Alice mounted on the pillion behind her husband, and followed by their servants, began her journey to London. Lisle did

not wish to hurry on the road, as Alice was much wearied by her labours, and he thought that by an occasional wayside rest the journey would be so easily performed as to be pleasant. He therefore took all the pretty bye-roads that he knew, and it was already the evening of the third day before they reached London-bridge, and crossed over to Watling-street. The Watling-street of the Protectorate was different indeed from that of our own day: the houses were large heavily-timbered structures, plastered between the beams which supported and braced the buildings together; the fronts towards the street were ornamented with grotesque wood carvings, some very elaborate, and others very laughable; the high gables, and variety in the buildings, added much to the picturesque, but very little to the comfort of the owners of the houses or to the passers-by, who, in wet weather, ran a gauntlet through streams of greater or less magnitude until they were drenched to the skin. On some of the older houses there yet remained the niches which had once held the effigy of a saint, and on a few wood carvings you could trace the story of the Redeemer's life; the appearance of the street conveyed the idea to the stranger that the houses were owned by a thrifty and wealthy race of people. In fine weather Watling-street was not an unpleasant residence, but in wet weather the rain poured through a gutter in the middle of the street, and threatened to enter in at the street doors. By night a horn lantern was an absolute necessity, except when the moon was high, and the weather clear. The number of houses, even at that time, surprised Alice, who had never seen

a large town ; and when passing through the rows of shops on London-bridge, it was difficult to believe that the Thames flowed underneath them. When she arrived at Watling-street, and Lisle drew up at his own door, she was glad to see the servants who had gone on the day before, to prepare for her arrival. It seemed to her like the faces of friends among strangers ; for she remarked that London must be the loneliest place in the world without friends. Lisle assured her that she would not be without many friends ; that it was the head-quarters of the Parliamentary party, and, therefore, likely to be full of their adherents while the war lasted. Alice hoped that she might find friends among those politically associated with her husband, and thus benefit her father ; her correspondence with him was easier, and would, therefore, be more frequent. With this view she took the greatest pains to understand the relative positions of parties in the state, and heard with surprise, mingled with natural emotions of pride, how important a place her husband filled in what were considered the republican ranks. Her simple manners and kind disposition won upon many, who respected Alice as well for her worth as for the dignified patience with which she bore her sufferings. She said that it was God's will to call upon them to suffer, and as it was for conscience sake, her father would be more grieved by any expressions of impatience on his behalf than gratified by her sorrow ; that he had engaged in the war from the first with a clear conviction that it was his duty, and that life was well spent when sacrificed in the path of duty. Lisle
well as his wife had few selfish hopes, even in the

success of their party ; and the ‘waiters on Providence,’ as many of the members were called, regarded them as enthusiasts, good for use, but ignorant of worldly craft ; yet it was acknowledged that Lisle had more influence with numbers than any other civilian.

After much intercession Alice prevailed on Lisle to allow her to go and see her father. There had been rumours that fever prevailed at Winchester, and although Captain Gifford said nothing of it in his letters, Alice was alarmed, and set out, attended by a servant, with a pass for Winchester. It was mid-winter, the weather was not severe, but close and heavy, with a more than usual quantity of rain ; the lowlands were flooded, and during the journey they frequently left the highway, and travelled on higher ground by cross-roads, until they arrived at Winchester.

When Alice presented herself with an order for admission to see her father, Captain Knox entreated of her not to run the risk of losing her life by the contagion.

“Your father has been very ill,” said the Captain, “but I hear that he is better, and likely to do well, unless his years are against him.”

“And why did you not tell us, Captain Knox ?” said Alice, entreatingly.

“Your father strictly forbade me ; he has been allowed much more latitude than is usual, for he read to some of the greatest villains in creation, and kept the gaol quiet, and I suspect he must have caught the fever from them. It’s a pity such a good life should be lost for such gaol-birds as he has been among.”

“Ah, Captain Knox,” said Alice, “to my father they would only be sinners perishing for lack of know-

ledge ; I can understand why he wished to conceal his illness from us."

When Captain Gifford saw Alice brought in by one of the warders, he could hardly believe it was not a vision. "Alice, my child, Alice!"

"Yes, father," she said, and was going to rush to him, when the warden held her.

"No, ma'am, no ; on no account touch him ; speak, if you like."

Alice was going to reply, her whole body trembling with emotion, when her father said,—

"Wagstaff is right, my child, you must not come near me, or you may take the fever ; after a day or two it may be less dangerous."

"Oh, father, father," said Alice, "God help us of His mercy. How have you lived in this miserable place?"

"Very happily, my child ; I have found plenty of my Master's work to do. Some have died blessing their Redeemer's name, and confessing their sins, who had once lived only to blaspheme ; and others, my child, are learning to know the Lord. I have been very ill, I don't know how long, but some days, is it not Wagstaff?"

"Yes, Captain," said the Warden, almost moved to tears, "it is nigh a week since you were in the ward, and I wish you were there again, for there is some peace then."

Alice knew then what her father had done, and felt more comforted in his afflictions ; they were the marks of true discipleship, and she spoke no more of her sufferings, but set to work to alleviate them

by attention and kindness. She procured for him many necessaries, and paid money liberally to the warders. Her father asked her to read to him, and then begged to hear of the last hours of his wife.

"I shall not die, Alice ; I have a sure confidence that the Lord will deliver me out of this place, and that I shall yet once more join you and my dear son Lisle."

Alice expressed her fervent hopes that it might be so, and then, after staying awhile, Wagstaff came and said that Mistress Alice must go, and might return on the morrow.

Captain Gifford was not moved at parting ; he had kept her at a distance while in the room, and he hoped that she might be spared the fever. She was spared, but she wrote to Lisle and said that her father's recovery was impossible unless he could be removed.

For many days Alice went and came, and was always kindly received. Captain Knox said that the Puritans found their religion useful in trouble, for they clung to each other with deep affection, and were exemplary in their conduct. He exacted a promise from her that the freedom of admission which he gave should not be used as a means of escape. Alice gave the promise, and her father said, "They are very careful of me, but I am not now equal to another Lunnon's-lane ; they may safely send me from my prison-house when I can walk, yet I can truly say 'it has been good for me that I have been afflicted.'"

With much difficulty, and upon Captain Knox's representation that Gifford was entirely disabled from active service, his discharge was sent, and as Alice was one day passing through the guard-rooms an officer

said Captain Knox wished to speak with her. Alice was very anxious, and fearful lest her visits should be suspended. Beyond giving money to the warders—a recognised wrong—she had transgressed no laws, and when Captain Knox looked pleasantly, she thought it might be that some additional comforts which she had asked might be granted. But taking up a paper, he said,—

“I never, madam, had a greater pleasure than I have to-day in placing the order for your father’s discharge in your hands.”

She could hardly believe that it could be true; she burst into tears, and then said,—“Oh, forgive me, Captain Knox; I am indeed very grateful for all the kindness that I have received at your hands. But this assures me of my father’s safety, and I do not know how to thank you.”

“I need no thanks,” said the Captain. “It is one of the few pleasant duties left us in these troublesome times.”

Alice could scarcely walk fast enough through the passages to her father’s cell. She held out the paper, and without betraying any emotion, Captain Gifford said,—

“It is my discharge, Alice. I fully expected it, not to-day or to-morrow, but when the Lord had given victory to His people.”

“Father,” said Alice, “I almost despaired; I have left these long corridors, and dark passages, thinking it was useless to hope; but I shall learn now never to despair, and to trust the Lord always.”

ways, my dear child;” and then, smiling,

he said, "I must try my legs, for I do not know how I can walk yet ;" raising himself, he said, quietly, "I must have help to leave this place, although I needed none to come here."

"And you shall have it, father," said Alice: then seeing that it would require another day to remove him, she said, "I will go and get a waggon, or light cart, and move you a few miles to-morrow, and so by gentle journeyings we shall reach London."

"Yes, my child, I must be carried this time; and I shall see the outside of these walls with very different feelings from those with which I first regarded them. My companions will be more pleasant than those rascals from the cave. They were the worst of all the bad men that I ever met."

Captain Gifford was removed immediately from the cells into one of the officers' rooms, which happened to be vacant, where he enjoyed the fresh air and entire change of scene. When it was known that he was to depart, many of his old companions were anxious to see him, but Captain Knox strictly forbade it; he was not able to bear the fatigue. Gifford, however, sent them kind messages and presents, begging Wagstaff to tell them that he would remember them in his prayers. He devoted a portion of the last day in prison to prayer and thanksgiving; and then distributing everything that he had among warders and the poorest prisoners, he left amid prayers and blessings, Alice saying it seemed little like leaving a prison.

Captain Gifford was not able to walk, they therefore removed a bed, and placing it on slings, carried him to the cart which was to convey him away. He begged

to be raised up to look at the Castle, and after thanking Captain Knox for his kindness and care, he said,

" Farewell, Winchester, farewell ! thou hast been a weary place for me and mine. I trust it is our last farewell to thee."

Alice said, " Father, any place would be painful that was our prison."

" Yes, my child, but I do not regret, for others' sakes, my imprisonment ; and for my own I cannot regret it, because it has put me a few steps on my way to rest ; but I have had a feeling that this place will not be well for thee, and so I say very heartily, Farewell, Winchester !"

Alice did not reply ; she thought that weakness of body had affected her father's mind, and that he would be well with the return of his strength and fresh air. It was a clear February morning when they left Winchester ; the song of the birds, beginning their spring warblings, and the warm sunshine, revived Gifford, so that he begged them to prolong the journey, and get nearer London.

" I want to be home, and to embrace my son, Alice, and to ask his pardon for taking away his wife, albeit she is my child."

" You need not ask forgiveness, father," said Alice : " Lisle will only love me better for doing my duty. He is one of your soldiers, and places duty above all present inclinations."

The day passed very happily, and when night drew on, Captain Gifford was so little fatigued, that he proposed to finish his journey next day ; and to lodge in

Watling-street, as he said jokingly, with one John Lisle, an ex-captain of horse, and a good soldier.

The road-side inn offered good accommodation, for it was much frequented; while the gentle manners of Alice and the worn look of her father made silent appeals to the better feelings of mine host of the 'King Charles's Head,' who did his best to make them comfortable, and to provide horses for their departure early on the morrow. When the day again broke fine and clear, and the crisp frost sparkled in the grass, Alice thought that her father had done well to hasten his journey, and avoid any unpleasant change of weather.

She saw the cart prepared, and had her father dressed early, that he might enjoy his breakfast, and once more breathe the pure morning air. "It will do him good," she said, "after so long a confinement." And so he thought too, for they had ever seemed to be of one mind. Soon the houses began to be frequent, and some of the church spires to be seen; then London-bridge was passed; at last they came to Watling-street, where they found Lisle, hardly knowing which to welcome and which to embrace first.

"God bless you, my son! God bless you, Lisle!" said the affectionate man. "You have been a comforter to the bereaved mother and child, and now give joy to a poor prisoner's heart. The God of Israel bless thee!" And with tears and blessings they entered Lisle's house, their united home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE change from a prison to a large city did not affect Gifford's health beneficially, and as he had expressed a wish not to go again to the Grange, Alice was obliged to watch her father with redoubled care. The slightest change in the weather produced severe cold ; he who had never known illness before, perceived in the constantly recurring attacks a warning to prepare for another and greater change. During the summer Cromwell sent for Lisle to the north, and procured his return for Northallerton, thus hoping to bind him more closely to his own interests. Nor was Lisle unwilling to accept the invitation : the Parliament had become the supreme power in the country ; they raised taxes, enrolled troops, and collected military stores and ammunition ; they had even then discussed the question of creating a new seal, to be the great seal of the nation ; and Lisle hoped that his influence, already great among the members of the House, would increase if he sat amongst them. Cromwell had no sooner procured Lisle's election, than he hastened his return to London, for he said,—

“ I cannot fight without recruits and supplies, and I shall trust to you to keep up my interest, and the interest of the nation, within the House. It is for our country that we are fighting ; there are men of nearly every party in the house, but the most part are there to serve themselves. Now, Lisle, you, I know, do not put yourself first.”

“ I hope not,” said Lisle.

"No," said Cromwell; "it has been with you a matter of principle and duty, and, before God, I say it has been so with me. I have had many strugglings with the spirit, and much conflict before I began this great work; but I shall finish my work and be finished by it. God speed you."

Lisle left Northallerton escorted by the burgesses and carrying with him their good wishes. He had spoken many times in the sort of half sermon, half speech then common; had he not been their member, there were not a few who thought that he would have made them a gifted minister, able to exhort them in season and out of season. His departure was more like the parting of friends, than the separation of men who a few weeks before had not known each other by name. But Lisle did not delay his journey to London. He had received only one letter from Alice, which mentioned her father's increasing debility, and that his mind wandered to the Grange, so that she thought either he wished to go there, or that there was a general weakening of his mental powers. Lisle was hardly prepared for the state in which he found his house on his return. He arrived in Watling-street early in the morning, and his first greeting was scarcely uttered, when Alice said,—

"Have you had no letters?"

"Only this," said Lisle.

"My poor father," said Alice,—"my poor father, he has asked for you so many times. He cannot live long, I am sure. He has prayed so earnestly for you, and said he wished to see you, and give you his blessing, before he died."

Lisle could only say, "I knew nothing of this; your letters have been intercepted; let us hasten to him."

They entered the room. Gifford was sleeping; the calm look and tranquil slumber caused Lisle to say, "Alice, he is sleeping so peacefully that I do not think we need fear any ill."

"No ill can betide him," said Alice; "he has for the last week been trying to settle all his worldly affairs, and some of the gifted brethren have been here to pray with him; but they all say that they come to learn the way to die, and not to teach."

Alice burst into tears, then checking her emotion, she moved slowly out of the room, followed by her husband. Lisle could not tell her of his success at Northallerton, for all his pleasure was gone when he saw that the man who had been his dearest friend was lying between life and death; he could not but believe his end to be very near. Alice said that he had forbidden her to write about his illness at first, but she could not obey him; for "he said that you were in the path of duty, therefore he would not recall you, however much he wished your return; but when he seemed to feel his end was approaching, then he was very anxious, asking many times in the day if you had been heard of, and when we said 'No,' he said, 'God grant me strength to see him before I die;' and his prayer has been heard, for he has not slept so soundly for the last week."

"His prayers have been often heard," said Lisle. "He has lived as if death would never be a surprise. His prison life has been useful to many a poor soul, and he will not be soon forgotten."

Lisle and Alice went to the dying man's room : he said, " Lisle, is it you ? God bless you, my son, my prayers are heard. Let me bless you before I die."

He then asked to be raised up, and although exhausted by the effort, he prayed, blessing them as his dear children ; then he said, " I have wished to go again to the Grange : it may be only the restlessness which comes before the end ; but if God willed, I could look a farewell with pleasure on the scene of much happiness, and much anxious care. There first I knew the Lord ; there I taught in His name, and there,"—he paused,—“ yes, Alice, I will rest beside your mother. She was a loving wife, Alice ; we shall meet again.”

“ Do not exhaust yourself, father,” said Alice, deeply moved.

“ No, no, my child ; but I must speak now ; I shall soon,—soon be silent. Lisle, I do not regret the course I have taken. I must soon give my account. I have not shed any man's blood willingly.”

“ Nor except in self-defence,” said Lisle.

“ Nor except in self-defence,” repeated the dying man. “ But peace, my son, seek for peace ; the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

There was a long silence ; the difficulty of breathing became so marked, that Alice feared each moment would be the last. Lisle knelt to pray, and implored the mercy of God for one who had been the friend of the afflicted.

“ Say for a poor weary sinner,” gasped the dying man. “ God be merciful to me, for Christ's sake !”

Again they saw him doze and wake. "I am going home ;—yes, Mary, it is time."

"Father!" said Alice, "father!"

"Yes, my child; I am going home. Your mother is there."

Wandering so that they hardly knew whether he understood what he said, they were surprised to find that he answered their questions sensibly, and that he appeared to understand even passing observations. Hours passed away, yet there was no relief for the sufferer. Evening closed upon them, they watched. Gifford said,—

"Go to rest, Alice; go, Lisle, take her to rest; she will be worn out."

But still she remained, begging not to leave him. "I will lay me down here, father," she said; and he assented.

It was nearly midnight, when Lisle awoke Alice, saying that there was a great change in her father. She had slept, but she rose up, and saw that the end was come. He breathed heavily, looked fondly at her, and feebly grasped her hand, which she placed in his; then saying, "I come," he breathed his last. It was an hour of bitterness of soul to Alice; she had shared every thought of her father's heart, and had received a masculine training, yet she retained all the gentleness of her mother's character. She could honour her father for his worth and goodness, and she respected his consistency, which had won praise from his enemies. He had, she knew, done all from a sense of duty; with him to fear God and to do

right had been ever the aim and end for which he thought a man should live.

But the sorrow for the departed was alleviated by her anxiety to comply with his wish to lie beside his wife in the churchyard of Batcombe. They had much to do to prepare for the journey, and to be sure that nothing would hinder the fulfilment of their sacred duty. Alice therefore resolved to go to the Grange, and to get all ready in the house to receive her father's remains, and also to ask Mr. Wentworth to prepare the grave.

"He will forget all but my father's kindness," said Alice.

"Yes," said Lisle, "he is not likely to oppose your wishes, or mine, Alice. I believe that while he viewed our opinions with the utmost abhorrence, he respected your father's consistent life, and wished his people to follow it."

Alice set out early on the second day after her father's decease; mounted behind a trusty servant, she began her journey to Batcombe. She was protected by a pass from the General of the district, the object of her journey being stated, that she might have no hindrance, either from foes or friends. Her arrival at Batcombe Grange gave the first intelligence of Gifford's death, and wherever she told the object of her journey she received the sympathy of all parties. Even in the bitterness of party strife, the death of a good man was keenly felt, and with feeling generosity each tried to recall some kind deeds or gentle words of the departed: the country folk praised him as a brave man, as able with the

sword as at the plough ; while his own party remembered him as a powerful preacher of the everlasting Gospel.

When Alice had arranged everything with the old servant, she sent to Mr. Wentworth, who expressed his sorrow for her loss, and his desire that everything should be done as seemed best to herself and Lisle, offering her at the same time all the assistance which the village could afford. Alice was comforted in thinking that her father would be followed to his last resting-place by many sorrowing friends. She then walked round the house, and recalled to her memory the many pleasant hours that she had spent there, the happiest of her life, because unalloyed by any care. The place was much changed ; the moat was dried up except on one side, where it was used as a pond to water the cattle ; the walls were neglected, and covered with lichens ; ivy was beginning to creep up them, and the peaceful occupation of the place was shewn by the sleek cattle, which were coming home for the night. Alf, the herdsman, was very pleased to hear her say that the cattle looked as they used to do in their best days. It was the height of his ambition to have his cattle look as Master Gifford's once did, before the troubles. He would have then backed them against the county ; and to hear praise from Alice's lips was to him to hear it from her father, she was so like him in everything.

It was more than a week before the funeral could take place, and when it did the willing attendance of the whole parish was the best testimony to the character of the departed Puritan. There was little ap-

pearance of outward mourning, but scarcely a person was unmoved when the body was taken from the church to the grave ; and when afterwards they went into the church to hear a sermon from the minister, they were gratified with the calm and moderate way in which Mr. Wentworth improved the occasion, according to the custom of the time.

When Lisle and Wentworth met after the funeral, they were mutually disposed to kindly feelings. Lisle was confident in the success of his party, and Wentworth was anxious to avoid fresh subjects of dispute, while retaining hopes. He said he thought the day would come when men would be tired of strife, and accept the King's prerogative, which was his right, as the only means of reconciliation.

"Never, Mr. Wentworth," said Lisle. "We have now performed our last duty to a man whom I know you respected ; there are many such men left, ready to die, but not to submit to the old laws. You do not see or feel the evils, because you are secluded from the world ; but you would feel them if you lived in towns, and knew as I know, that the country cannot protect its commerce, nor obtain respect from foreign powers."

"Shall we do this by civil strife ?" asked Mr. Wentworth.

"No," said Lisle ; "but this strife must end, and soon end ; God alone knows how. There seems no hope of safety for us but in victory, for the King and his advisers will be bound by no terms and keep no treaties."

"Is it not," said Wentworth, "that we have such

a respect for law and order, than a victory over the great symbol of law and order causes even the conquerors to fear? And is not there also a great danger lest you establish some tyranny, some great despotism?"

"There is no one but the King to be a despot," said Lisle.

"I have no faith in democracies," said Wentworth. "No individual man can be a tyrant but by the destruction of laws and liberties that have first been violated."

"I do not understand you," said Lisle.

"I will explain," said Wentworth. "You seek to obtain an end—more liberty—and you use unlawful means; you take the sword against your lawful King, and if you conquer you can only overcome the army by which you have conquered your King with a tyranny such as a King would not dream of."

"I see no such danger in an assembly where all are equal," replied Lisle.

"But all are not equal," said Wentworth: "if all were as upright as Gifford, even though in grievous error, as I think, we might then hope that errors would be corrected by good principles. But when ambition is the ruling passion of some, and money of others, and when all seek their own ends, soon the strongest will with the least principle will rule. It is the case in all democracies."

"You can hardly know the state of parties," said Lisle, "and you argue from your reading. I see the men, and know that power is so nicely balanced, that the rights of England are safe in the hands of

"God grant that they may be so," said Wentworth; "but I shall follow my King, and live and I hope die a Royalist."

"If there be any King to obey," said Lisale.

Wentworth started, and was going to reply, when Alice came to speak to him about her father's wishes for the poor of the parish. He had desired that on the Lord's day after his death some alms should be given, and naming a few old friends, had left the remainder to Mr. Wentworth's discretion. They were soon busily engaged in talking over the condition of the poor, and in hearing of some who had left the parish, or of others who were still living in poverty and sickness.

"My father's last wishes, after his family, were for the people of Batcombe," said Alice; "I am sure, Mr. Wentworth, by your kindness to-day, you will do all you can for them. We shall have to leave here in a few days, let us hear from time to time of a people who are dear to us by the remembrance of the past; to me because they live around what is now more than my home, for it is the resting-place of my parents."

Arrangements were then made for some memorial to her father; and Mr. Wentworth left the Grange to fulfil the wishes of one who was no longer the enemy of his party, but the kindly remembered benefactor of his poor people.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE last duties performed, and a few farewells to old friends who came to see Alice and her husband, they once more returned to their house in Watling-street. All the family met together for prayer on their arrival, for Lisle had modelled his house upon the Puritan plan. He read a chapter in the Bible, and then offered an extempore prayer. Sometimes they sung a hymn; this was always at Alice's suggestion, who was fond of singing, and had more cheerful views of religion than pervaded the party to which her husband belonged.

Lisle was soon immersed in business; he was so much occupied in the House, and with his profession, that he was never at home, and it was only on the Lord's day, when he never would do any work, that they had an opportunity of speaking together. Then it was that Alice presented her petitions for poor prisoners, and for political offenders.

"You are a sad beggar, Alice," Lisle said to her: "if every member's wife took as much care of our enemies, it would be useless to take any prisoners."

"Every prisoner that you release becomes disarmed by your kindness, so that they are twice conquered," said Alice; "and mercy is the best of conquerors."

Late in the evening,—it was a memorable evening to Alice in after life,—Lisle came home in high spirits; his cheeks were flushed, his eyes bright, but he said nothing.

"What is the matter, Lisle?" said Alice.

"And do you wish to know, my Alice?" said Lisle. "Well, then, there is more work for you; Cromwell has gained a great battle at Naseby; the King's men were routed, and we have got all the King's private letters, which I am to look over before they are printed."

"And my work will be to intercede for the unfortunate," said Alice.

"Yes," said Lisle, "there will be many in trouble, for it was a complete victory. All the King's artillery and baggage were captured."

"And will not the King rally his troops again?" said Alice. "What is the use of victory, which only leaves many more homes desolate, and makes many mourning mothers?"

"The use that Cromwell will make of this victory, Alice, will be to seize the King's person, and to settle the contest by compelling him to disband his troops, and respect the laws which are passed by the Houses of Parliament."

A messenger arrived with papers, Lisle was soon busily engaged in reading them.

No greater misfortune could have happened to the King than the loss of his private correspondence. Lisle found that he was, with others, denounced by name, and that there was no safety for the Parliamentary party but in the complete subjection of their opponents. They were spoken of as rebels, who would be put beyond the pale of the law the moment that they laid down their arms. If the party required any stimulants to increased exertions, they had now obtained them. Lisle caused the letters to be printed,

and circulated throughout the country. He shewed the originals to those who were in danger, and an order was issued to arrest all the active friends of the King who had concealed themselves from public notice, yet who were now betrayed. This was a greater blow than many battles to the King's cause: none knew whether they were safe. Cromwell, who knew that the strife was not to end in any compromise, pressed on his troops, and especially on his officers, whom he had selected as well for their devotion to his person as for the cause, to use every means for obtaining the person of the King. He rapidly improved the advantages of his victory, enlisted many of the best of the soldiers that he had defeated, and taking one town after another, drove the King into Wales; whence, after some time, he again made his way to Oxford. The issue of the campaign left all the fortified places in the kingdom in the hands of the Parliamentary soldiers or partisans. The King was now without confidence in his subjects, or any hopes that a favourable turn could be given to his affairs. He resolved, therefore, to make terms with the Scottish army, then besieging Newark, and he hoped by the means of their assistance to disconcert Cromwell, who was now prominently before the nation as a victorious general; and he relied, to his cost, on the loyalty of the Scottish people to their ancient line of kings. At all events, it seemed to be the only way to avoid a prison, or a flight from the country, which would ruin the future hopes of his children.

Early in the month of May the King set out for the camp at Newark; and as the Parliamentarians,

by means of their spies, knew that some move was intended, they issued a proclamation, declaring that any person found harbouring Charles Stuart should be put to death. No one exactly knew the King's intentions, and Cromwell's plans were for the moment completely disconcerted. The two parties which divided the power of the kingdom were the Independents and the Presbyterians: when it became known that the King had surrendered himself to the Scotch, and was actually in their camp, Cromwell wrote to Lisle to spare no time in opening negotiations with the Scotch. He said that if the King prevailed on the Scotch to take up his cause, another campaign was certain; and that he neither could nor would surrender his troops to the Scotch, if they would be surrendered, which he was sure they would not be,—they were angry that the King had escaped them, and fearful lest by any compromise between the King and the Scotch their liberties should be surrendered. He gave an outline, merely as his opinion, but knowing that in the distracted state of public affairs the opinion of a general at the head of an army is usually the law. He suggested that commissioners should be sent from Parliament to the Scottish army, to remind them of all that they had suffered from Prelacy, of which the King was the great upholder. He hinted that they should be told that they were not the only troops in the country; that the army which the year before had conquered at Naseby was still as effective in its discipline, and more formidable in numbers, than before that great and crowning mercy of the Lord. At the same time, he sent secret agents to the town and the

army. He excited the people's fears, by saying that the Scotch would never return to their poor, barren country, but would remain to fatten in England's fair fields. He enlarged upon their want of discipline. To the Scotch generals his agents said that the King could not be trusted; his best friends had fallen by his want of truthfulness ; and he would sacrifice them to the Parliament so soon as he could obtain his own ends. He hinted his own powers, and his friends', said that he had never been defeated, and was not likely to be while he had an army devoted to his person, and bound to him by ties of religious faith, personal affection, and a military discipline such as England had never seen equalled, and such as never could be excelled.

Lisle was fully aware of the extent of their danger. It was more difficult in any emergency to manage parties in Parliament, than to obtain a victory in the field. There were so many waiters on Providence ready to change to the strongest side, so many that were anxious not to let the army become over-powerful, that Lisle could with difficulty persuade them to be of one mind, or to act with any decided purpose. It was at length resolved that the Parliament would send commissioners, that they might be informed upon what terms the King had surrendered himself to the Scottish army. Their fears suggested a compromise between the King and the Presbyterians ; and the commissioners received instructions that in the event of any advance being made by the Scotch army, they were to apprise Cromwell at once, to send messengers to the garrisons to hold

the towns, and to beware of all attempts at surprise or any treaty with the King. Although they were called Commissioners, they were really spies in the Scottish camp, bound hand and foot, except to do one work, and that they could do at any cost. They had unlimited power to obtain possession of the royal person : to obtain this end they might use bribes, treaty, or persuasion. It had become a settled principle in the minds of all the prominent leaders, that no settlement of their present troubles could ever take place so long as the King had any power left either to call upon the people to assist him, or to treat with individuals ; and had the people been able to trust the royal word, Cromwell knew that the King's name was a tower of strength, not easily to be overthrown.

Alice, who was more than a looker on, warned Lisle that the position of affairs was fast tending to a question who should be their ruler—Charles Stuart or Oliver Cromwell. Lisle only laughed, and said that the army could not exist a day without the Parliament. With ready wit Alice replied,—

“ You mean that the Parliament could not sit unless they were supported by Cromwell's troops, and then Cromwell's troops are Cromwell. They do what he bids them, and you will soon find your republic a military despotism. You have not seen all the movements: you receive your instructions from Cromwell; you use his army to alarm the Scotch; and what will he require in return ? ”

“ He is a good man, and a patriot,” said Lisle; “ and he has hitherto shewn no desire to rule.”

"He is a wise man," said Alice, without any idea of a political Utopia, "he may be a good man; but you cannot deny that he is assuming a position that puts Fairfax and Essex into the shade."

"Would that your father were yet alive?" said Lisle.

Alice sighed, and said, "He is at rest, Lisle, from all the stormy passions of the world. But had he lived, I doubt if he would have approved of our present position. The war is no longer to obtain concessions from the King; these might be obtained."

"Yes," said Lisle, hastily, "at the cost of our lives."

"I trust not," said Alice; "but is not the eagerness to obtain the King's person caused by the possession of his letters; and is not possession of the royal person imprisonment, and may it not be even more, death?"

Lisle did not answer, he was anxious and weary. He had looked upon this terrible eventuality, and he resolved to put away all thoughts of the future, seeing that he was surrounded by a host of present difficulties. Time more than realized Alice's doubts and his own fears.

CHAPTER XX.

WE must now return to the camp at Newark. The King had arrived, and everywhere been met with those outward marks of respect to his person which he had received in happier times; it seemed as if a sudden confidence had been inspired by his trust in the Scottish people. A guard was appointed him, but only

as a guard of honour. For a short period the King had hopes that a portion of his people were loyal to his person and throne. On the arrival of the Commissioners the whole aspect of affairs changed. The emissaries of Cromwell had not been idle, and the doubling of his guard, together with the strict watch kept on his movements, assured the King that he was really a prisoner, and that he would not be allowed on any pretence to leave the camp.

The indignities that, to our disgrace, often attend upon fallen greatness, soon began to be felt to their fullest extent by the King. The preachers insulted him in their sermons, and reproached him with tyranny : one of them went so far as to give out a psalm applying to the condition of tyrants, when the King, with meekness and great dignity of manner, rose and gave out another, which forcibly expressed his unhappy and forlorn condition. There were many brave men who would have delivered a fallen King ; they pitied their sovereign when stripped of his power, and standing before them in the simple majesty of an injured man. There were many others who wished for a settlement of differences ; not a few hoped to make the Presbyterian religion the dominant religion of England, and this party included all the Scotch preachers. A more moderate party desired to have security for the freedom of religious worship ; a very large number, including petty chiefs and officers, were influenced by the lowest motives, and the Commissioners dealt freely with them. There was no fear of any opposing force, for the Scots had demanded the surrender of the garrison from the King when they took posses-

sion of the royal person. The arrears of the Scotch army were large; there were no funds to pay them; and the officers could not restrain the general wish expressed by the army to accept an offer of the Commissioners that they should deliver up the King into their hands and receive full payment of all arrears due to them. It was in vain that some protested against so great a crime as selling their King for money, and that others said it would affix an indelible disgrace on the Scottish name and race. The price—it proved to be the price of blood—was paid, and the Commissioners had completed the only task they were free to perform,—they had obtained the custody of their King. The success of the Parliament led Lisle to hope that the armies would be disbanded, and that the minds of the people would be turned to settling the government of the country. He shewed Alice a letter which he had written to Cromwell, and was annoyed at her remark,—“I do not think that Cromwell considers it is to his interest to disband the army which he commands, and possibly they may object to be disbanded.”

When Cromwell received the letters from the Parliament, together with a letter from Lisle, which was a strictly private communication, he saw that Lisle wished for a republic, and had supported the republican party in the House. He at once resolved to make that party odious with the army. He never intended to have a republic after he had seen his own way to power. He called a meeting of his officers; he sighed, and uttered short sentences: “The Lord had done a great work; it was His work,

a great work. The sword of the Lord had smitten Amalek, and cast down idolatries and popish imaginations. Agag was a prisoner: should others wickedly release him?" Then, holding out the letters of the Parliament,—" See, we must be sent as lambs to the slaughter. Every Ishmaelite shall pluck the Lord's people by the beard. Was it for this that the soldiers had poured forth their blood like water, and with the sword of the Lord overcome fenced cities and armed men?" His officers, who had been raised from the ranks for personal valour and soldierly qualities, were alarmed; for they saw that their disbandment would reduce them to the rank of private citizens, without occupation, and with habits ill-fitted for regular work; they heard their General groaning, and calling on the Lord for guidance. At length he dismissed them, saying "that the Parliament had not waited for the Lord, and that an evil spirit had led them astray. He did not wish for command; the Lord, who knew his heart, knew that it was a burden to his soul. They should go and ask counsel of the Lord, and pray that He would assist the deliberations of the Houses of Parliament."

The meeting had not long dispersed when it was evident that some great movement was going on in the army. Groups of soldiers stood around some half-soldier, half-preacher, and listened to the bitterest reproaches of the Parliament. "Did they want to surrender them to the King? Blindness had happened to Israel." The preachers called the men to prayer, saying that the Lord's work was in great extremity of danger. Here a sergeant told his men that they

should down with those Ahithophels, who troubled the Lord's anointed, and vexed them for their reward. There a soldier shewed his wounds, and asked his comrades if this was all they were to get for blows and toils : one of them, who saw Cromwell at a distance, called on him, as the servant of the Lord, to deliver them from all the troublers of Zion.

Another meeting was held, at which the officers said that the army had resolved not to disband itself, but called upon Cromwell to lead them wherever he wished, and they would follow him. Cromwell saw that his hour was come : he muttered that he was unable to do so great a work ; he was not fitted to be a leader in great enterprises ; he was a weak vessel, only sustained of the Lord, and working by His power. Again he was entreated, and a gifted soldier prayed that the Lord would direct their religious exercises to a good end. He said the Lord's ends were always good ; He had been with them at Marston Moor, He had supported them at Edge Hill, and fought with them at Naseby. He would convey their wishes to Parliament ; he was their servant, to do them this kindness, even if it cost him his life, which he had ventured many times and oft by their side. "The Lord," he said, "direct our ways." So saying, he dismissed the meeting with sighs and groans.

He wrote to the Parliament that he wished of himself to be free from his employments, for he was quite unequal to the great work of command. He
a chosen vessel of the Lord to deliver His
of great straits : the soldiers were not
separated while great danger remained

to threaten them, and while the Amalekites could pluck them by the beard. He said that he had not dared to propose to the ranks the disbanding of the army. He had called a meeting of officers, the soldiers also had met together; and greater excitement had prevailed among godly men than he had ever seen before. They were now praying for guidance; and while he held it to be his duty to obey the Parliament, he would suffer wrong by delay rather than injure them in the good opinion of their old soldiers, who had borne for them grievous wounds of body and fortune.

At the same time that Cromwell wrote to the Parliament he sent messages which alarmed the Commons. Reports were rife in the House that the soldiers had begged Cromwell to lead them to London, and to hang all those who had asked for their dismissal: all the violent speeches of the preachers, and the letters of the soldiers, were allowed to be talked of openly; and the Parliament began to fear that their General was master of the position.

Cromwell wrote privately to Lisle, urging him to withdraw the proposal to disband the army until the country was at peace. He said the soldiers did not defraud any man; the camp was as orderly as any well-regulated town, and that it would be cruel to hand over men, who had ventured their lives for the common weal, to the mercy of half-subdued cavaliers or exasperated Royalists. Alice begged her husband to leave Parliament, to follow his profession, and wait for better times.

"I cannot, Alice," said Lisle; "the danger is very great, but we are now in Cromwell's power, and it is

only by making the best of our circumstances that we can hope to succeed. He may mean well; he has disciplined the men to his own mind, and they may not like to separate from him."

"But," said Alice, "you condemn the King for what is called opposing the Commons of England, and you allow a successful General to disobey a positive command."

"Very true, Alice," said Lisle; "but we have no force with which to compel obedience."

"Then," said Alice, "you exist only by Cromwell's will; and whenever it suits his will, he will pluck you from your places."

"But," said Lisle, "may he not be constrained by his own troops? and if so, is not his danger greater than even ours?"

"No," said Alice, "he can sufficiently control his men to make them obey him; they have the same ends in view—they want employment. He will gain power by their employment, only the people of England will pay for both."

Lisle said no more; he resolved to wait, for at the very worst they could but demand obedience after a few months, or reduce the power of the army by calling in some of the regiments; then, without any open rupture, they could again be assured that their power could not be overthrown by the soldiery. The House had postponed the danger they could only escape by meeting boldly and on the spur of the moment.

Cromwell saw the full extent of the victory which had gained, but he shewed no signs of triumph.

He saw the factions looking to the King as their tool, and resolved, if possible, to use him as their means to power. He resolved to take possession of the royal person, and sent for that purpose a cornet of horse to Holmby, whither the Commissioners had removed the King, and ordered that he should be brought to the camp, then on Triplo Heath in Cambridgeshire. The act, alarming enough in itself, was more so from the coolness and resolution with which the enterprise was conducted; for Cromwell immediately after left the camp to go to London. It was in vain that his officers remonstrated with him; he said he must go where the Lord called him. When they spoke of enemies from within as well as from without, he said he confided in One who knew his going out and his coming in; and as he left the camp his soldiers admired his daring in going alone into the midst of enemies, as much as they did his coolness when leading them to battle, and declared that if they hurt a hair of his head they would plunder the city.

Cromwell went to Watling-street immediately after his arrival in town, and explained to Lisle his reasons for seizing the King. He said that all the hopes of the factions were centred in him; that men had done great deeds, and then stood in stupid amazement at the greatness of their work; that pity was taking the place of duty; he had therefore removed the King to prevent a renewal of the war.

“But,” said Lisle, “how are you to justify your conduct to Parliament?”

“I can justify myself to God and my own con-

science," said Cromwell. "Will you go with me to the House?"

"To what end?" said Lisle.

"To support me, as I have ever supported you," replied Cromwell; "and if they attempt anything against you or against my person, by the help of the living God I will deliver this people and nation from their oppressors."

"But," said Lisle, "the Parliament is now the supreme power in these realms; what if they call on you to yield up the King, and disband your troops?"

"But they will not do so when they have heard me. I know their plottings, and they know that the King is only safe from the danger of false friends when surrounded by the army."

They set out together for Westminster, Lisle still speaking of the dangers from the soldiers.

"They are no common men," said Cromwell, "and they will only stand by me so long as I stand by their principles. They may follow Fairfax, or me, or Ireton, or even you, Lisle; but by all the powers of earth you could not lead them to serve the King."

Lisle saw that Cromwell had resolved to use the King for purposes of his own; what they were he could not then see, for he spoke of the seizure of the King as the act of the army.

When Cromwell arrived in the Hall, he perceived that his presence produced a general feeling of consternation. The Members had already planned a motion for his committal to the Tower for refusing obedience to their commands, and they wished to have it executed before he could take his place

in the House. He now stood before them, fully aware of the advantage of his position, resolved to vindicate his conduct and to overthrow his enemies. He rose in his place, and said that he had left the army to explain to the Parliament why he had not disbanded the troops; and he professed that he was the humblest of their servants, yet had the Lord given them many crowning mercies by his hand. They had thanked him, and he valued their thanks. It was gratitude for those thanks which led him to ask further counsel before they broke up the foundations of their strength at the bidding of sinful men. He was not the leader of idlers, tapsters, and roysterers, but of God-fearing men. They had not robbed any; the meanest man could say, ‘Whose ox have I taken?’ or ‘Whose ass have I taken?’ or ‘Whom have I defrauded?’ They had done no violence, and were they, after long services, to be sent home, to leave their ranks, unrewarded and uncared for? Divers of them came from far, and they would faint by the way. And as to their seizure of the King, there had been divers men, coming they knew not whence, saying that there were plots to deliver the King; there had been even said to be plots in the camp. The Lord only knew; he trusted in Him, and he would do His will.

Cromwell sat down; he saw from the silence which pervaded the assembly that his power over them was gone, and that a storm was rising. He left the House abruptly, glancing a look at Lisle as he went out.

He was not out of the walls ere a member rose, and said it was now plain to every man that General

Cromwell did not intend to obey the Parliament and to disband the troops. His speech was unsatisfactory, and his conduct equivocal in laying upon the troops the seizure of the King, and in detaining him in his own custody. "I propose, therefore, that General Cromwell be committed to the Tower, and that the Commissioners again resume their duties as appointed them by this House."

The proposition was seconded in a moment, and the whole feeling of the House was with the speakers. "Vote! Vote!" was the cry. Lisle was resolved to obtain a hearing; he said,—

"Do you want another war? I propose that the House defer the consideration of this question."

"No! no!" was the reply.

"Then hear me," said Lisle. "Is it wise to come to an open rupture with a General who has always conquered, or to quarrel with an army flushed with the remembrance of their past great deeds? You demand the King. Can you keep the King? Has it not been said that there are intrigues, even in this House, to set the King at liberty and to renew the war? When will this strife end, and where?"

Lisle was followed by a few other speakers, some of whom were for sending again for Cromwell and hearing further explanations, others of whom were opposed to any terms with a rebel against their power and authority. Every speaker was assailed by cries of "Vote! Vote!" The motion was speedily carried, and as speedily conveyed to Cromwell, who saw his danger, and, putting spurs to his horse, rode off, and not to rest until he had reached the camp, and told

the story of the attempt to arrest his person while trying to plead for the army. He spoke in respectful terms of the House of Parliament, but said there were among them some of the old leaven, and that they must be purged out before they could hope for peace. He was interrupted by shouts of welcome. They declared that they would have pulled down the Tower to reach him. And after the officers had met, they came to him with a resolution that they entreated of him to assume the supreme command, promising to obey him, and to follow wherever he chose to lead them. Cromwell professed to be bowed down by the burden they sought to lay upon him. He asked if they had not other Generals who had shewn zeal in doing the Lord's work. He said he would seek guidance in prayer; and he finally accepted the power which placed the destinies of England for a season in his hands.

It was rather as the friend of Cromwell than as approving his plans that Lisle had spoken, and he was not satisfied when he heard, on leaving the House, that Cromwell had fled to the army. The collision which he had deprecated and endeavoured to prevent could not be long delayed; and it needed no prophet to tell the House of Commons that their days were numbered, and that they would be very few.

CHAPTER XXI.

FROM the moment that Cromwell left the House of Parliament he had resolved never to part with the King; and it was easy for his enemies to perceive that most of the rumours of danger to the State proceeded from his emissaries. However, under this plea Lisle acted with him; and at last, contrary to the wishes of many friends and to the entreaties of Alice, he sat upon the bench when the King was put upon his trial. She had never liked Cromwell, and every day that she lived witnessed with fear his increasing power and influence; she had warned her husband that a day would come when they would suffer from the idol which they had set up. The republican party had little to hope for, they could only be said to exist; they were overpowered, used, and laughed at by Cromwell. The sentence of death passed upon the sovereign, his calm dignity during his trial, and his death at Whitehall, had entirely alienated the feelings of a large part of the wealthy and intelligent people of the country; and the difficulties of ruling England seemed to increase with the removal of the King. There were yet princes remaining, and the people looked to them as their lawful rulers, and would, at any moment, had they dared, have offered them their allegiance; but the country felt that it was ruled by no feeble hand. Ireland was subdued; the English fleets rode triumphantly in the Channel; the Dutch were beaten again and again, and lost their pre-eminence at sea; foreign courts did homage to

the Protector, as he was soon after called, and the sons of England's monarch were obliged to leave France to propitiate Cromwell's wishes. Alice often compared the condition of the country in her childhood, and her ideas of happiness and peace, with the state of society in which she was called upon to live. And she told Lisle, that although the glory of the country had been increased, and no doubt that its traffic with foreign nations was improving, yet that the people were not so happy, either in their domestic or public life. "No man," said Alice, "knows what may happen to-morrow."

"True," said Lisle, "but we are free. I should not be one of the rulers of this great country were the King upon the throne. Neither would you be worshipping, as you and your father wished to worship, without a prelacy and priestly clergy."

"And if the brethren had been hindered from teaching the word of God in its fulness," said Alice, "might not we have still had our Bibles, and our secret meetings? We have gained nothing by the change; I hear daily cries of want from the children of expelled clergymen. What can we expect, if we sow such seed, but to reap its fruits?"

"You are almost a royalist now, my sweet Alice," said Lisle; "I never heard you plead for them in days gone by as you now plead."

"They are unfortunate," said Alice, "and I do not therefore neglect their petitions; were my father alive, I believe that he would acknowledge that his hopes had been disappointed, and that our changes had not done any good to the people."

"I must not argue with you, Alice," said Lisle; "for I shall forget what I owe to the government of this country."

"Can you say, Lisle, that you feel, as you once did, that you are serving God? Are you not now serving the purposes of an ambitious and crafty man, who has raised himself to power on the shoulders of men who have no sympathy with his rule, and only submit to his acknowledged power?"

There was so much truth and so much goodness in Alice, that Lisle was not pleased with himself. He had known, as a lawyer, the truth of the King's argument, that no court could try him, that he was the acknowledged fountain of law, and could not be tried but by his own consent. He had yielded to the force of public opinion, and to his republican feelings, in signing the death-warrant of his sovereign; but he had never ceased to regret the act: the justification of State necessity could be no justification to take away life.

Alice was obliged to be one of the ladies who frequented the Protector's little court,—she was called the Lady Alice,—when titles increased in favour, and Cromwell, seeing the tide of public opinion setting strongly in favour of aristocratic institutions, wished to make the sovereign power hereditary in his family. She went to court very seldom; but was always received with marked attention by the Protector and his family. No man, probably, excelled Cromwell in the knowledge of men; he was seldom mistaken in the choice of his instruments; and he had received too many petitions from Lisle not to know that the

most grateful thing to his wife was to shew kindness to those who had suffered from the civil wars. It was on one of her visits to his court that the Protector took several pieces of gold, and said to her, " You have many petitioners, I hear; your husband tells me that he cannot return home unless he has something from me; distribute these among some of them for me."

" Your Highness is good," said Alice, " I have been very grateful for your answer to many of my petitioners; I have now some in comfortable circumstances who would otherwise have been most unhappy."

" It is," said Cromwell, " the only pleasant accompaniment of power. It costs me much pain to reject petitions that for reasons of state I cannot grant. The poverty of the clergy, who are suffering much, I cannot relieve; they are by principle, and, as they think, by interest, inseparably connected with the royal party and aristocratical government: they must suffer for their conduct."

" And they do suffer," said Alice; " the ejection of so many men with families from an occupation that unfits a man for other duties, has produced great suffering: I have relieved it whenever I could do so; but it surpasses any private charity; I am therefore thankful to give your Highness' alms."

Alice could hardly think this was the man who had procured the death of his sovereign; certain it is that, whether from motives of policy or from the dictates of good-nature, Cromwell was very anxious to avoid severity, and shewed great respect for the conscientious scruples of religious men.

The vicissitudes of the Protectorate afforded daily cause of anxiety to Lisle and cases of necessity to Alice. It was found impossible for Cromwell to meet the returning wish for monarchy ; and in his own family the ruler of the land could trace what was passing in many families. The attempt to offer him a crown had nearly alienated many of his warmest friends, while it angered those who had believed that they would ultimately have a republic.

One day a pamphlet was published, "Killing no Murder :" Cromwell read it, and said to Lisle, "I can do nothing to propitiate these men. Here is a paper which advocates that most dastardly of all things, assassination ; the fear of it now haunts me so that religion, and that reliance on God's decrees which I have ever believed, do not help me to shake off the gloom which seems to hang as a cloud over me."

Lisle said that some desperado might have written it, but that it could not be said to be a principle of Charles Stuart's party ; and that he thought the pamphlet should be thrown away, and no notice taken of it. Lisle undertook that it should be answered without seeming to be named.

"I am ill at ease," said Cromwell ; "I have laboured day and night for this people, to make them a great nation ; I have striven to promote the glory of God, and to do good to the souls of men ; God has laid upon me some great works, and I have performed n, and of some I can say men willed, but had not courage to perform."

our Highness has many friends, and the country .

is more quiet now that the honour of England is upheld in foreign lands."

"Yet they do not support me," said Cromwell; "I cannot bear this great burden for ever. Who will take it up when I lay it down?"

Lisle did not answer.

"You do not think the Republicans could rule the country," continued Cromwell; "that word is now hateful. It is only by my support that Parliament maintains any influence in the country; it is not respected."

"It might have been," said Lisle.

"I know not when," answered Cromwell, hastily; "the Lord has never guided their deliberations, and the people are weary of them."

"Had you put yourself at the head of the Parliament they would have been respected," said Lisle.

"And I?" said Cromwell.

Lisle did not reply, but immediately turned the conversation to the state of the country. When he had ended, he left, and came home so heavy-hearted that Alice was confident something had disturbed him: and when they had sat for some time in silence, she said,—“Lisle, is anything wrong?”

“Yes, Alice,” he said; “I have to-day learned, not my first lesson, but the longest lesson I ever had, on the instability of power. The Protector is frightened beyond measure at a pamphlet; he says he cannot shake off the effects of it; it is called ‘Killing no Murder.’”

“I have heard of it this morning; it is very much read, and I did not think any more of the pamphlet

than I should of any of the other scurrilous papers which are getting only too common."

"It is not what you think, but what the head of the government thinks, that is the question," said Lisle; "he does not rest from the fear of assassination which it has inspired. It may mean nothing, for I do not think so badly of Prince Charles's party as to think them assassins; but the book has a terrible effect on Cromwell."

"And what would assassination avail them? Richard will succeed his father; and if he has not the same capacity for ruling men, he has not so many enemies to fear. Henry, who is best fitted for power, retires from it," said Alice; "but there is a certainty that, in some way or other, the government would go on as it does."

"No, Alice, I do not partake of the Protector's fears, but I can see much trouble before us. His life is our life. Suppose it possible that Cromwell falls suddenly, and Prince Charles is proclaimed, we must go into exile. I shall quit the country when I see any movement to restore the royal power; for whatever others may suffer, it is certain that they who condemned King Charles will have to flee for their lives."

"That I have always feared," said Alice; "but let us hope that the Protector's life may be prolonged."

"It may be," said Lisle; "however it is impossible to look on without sad forebodings when a man who has faced danger in the field is prostrated by a book."

The Protector's family were a subject of frequent observations and discussions. Lisle concluded that

while he might be able to struggle on, yet that any great convulsion must overset the government. The army was divided, and they knew little about the Scotch division, which was under Monk, an able general, and a close, careful man. The English army was known to be republican, thus hindering all Cromwell's hopes of a kingdom. When the Protector reviewed his position, he found that he really depended only on the renown of his past actions, and his vigorous administration of government; that he had no personal party, and few personal friends.

It was in this situation of public affairs that the Protector was taken suddenly ill, and, to the consternation of his family and his dependants, died. Lisle was immediately summoned to be of Richard Cromwell's council, and at first all things looked well; for although none of the leaders had any confidence in his abilities, they were too fearful of each other to be able to oppose him.

A few months passed away, and the army again began to overawe the government, when Lisle retired, and refused to enter any more into public affairs. He said that he had spent the best of his life to oppose the tyranny of one man, and he would be no party to making twenty tyrants in his room. The army insisted that the new Protector should dismiss the Parliament, and although he despised them, he consented.

But he soon after renounced his dignity, and Henry, who governed Ireland well, resigned his office, so that the family of Cromwell became again private citizens.

Alice was very glad to see more of her husband, al-

though she saw him often sad, disgusted at the issue of a great enterprise, and preparing to exile himself for ever from his native land. He gave up the house in Watling-street, and parted with various articles which they had long cherished. Money was sent to Holland, to be placed in the banks. Friends and enemies offered advice : the former advised caution and more trust in the government ; the latter, confidence in the clemency of Prince Charles, who was certain to come to his throne. General Monk was reported to be advancing on London. He had learned from Cromwell to despise a disordered and divided House of Commons. Lisle heard daily of his advance, and perceived triumph marked on every royalist face. Monk was going to be Protector : Monk was going to reinstate the Stuarts. But he was silent ; and before he had arrived in London, Alice with Lisle had gone on board the packet-boat and sailed for Amsterdam.

" You are safe, Lisle," said Alice, " even though in exile ; and where you are, there is my happiness. Happier days may come, and we may see Batcombe Grange again."

" Never, Alice, never !" said Lisle.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE vessel had not more than touched the quays when a friendly hand put a note into Lisle's pocket. It contained only a single word,—“ Beware ! ” He shewed it to Alice, and she resolved to conceal her husband until night, and then to remove him to a lodg-

ing near to the quays, where they might see what was going on and be unobserved. During the bustle of disembarking passengers Lisle was not noticed, and Alice set out to find lodgings. She found many English people, but they were friends of the King : she heard bitter threats uttered against Old Noll and his party, and she was told that the King would have his own again, and put down the cropheads. She wandered along the quays, admiring the quaint-looking houses, until at length she found a Dutch family willing to receive them for a time. Alice said that her husband was so ill that he could not go out of doors, but that she would get a boat to bring him as near to the house as possible, and then he could, by the help of the men, walk into the rooms.

When she came back to the ship she told Lisle of her plan ; and as soon as it grew dark she again set out, to hire a boat and men to pull alongside the vessel, and to help her to remove her husband. She told the sailors he was weakened by sea-sickness ; and as they had seen him suffer during the voyage, they said that he would soon be better, and handed him over the side of the vessel into the boat.

"He's come over to see the King," said one ; "he is going to be his friend now."

"Well, friends is easily found when one doesn't want 'em," was the ready answer.

"And maybe," said another, in Alice's hearing, "he's found the country too hot for him ; them cropheads will have a sore time of it now."

"Ah ! it's all fair," was the answer ; "they have had their turn, and now t'others has theirs."

Alice covered her husband with a coarse rug, and was glad when, after a short pull, they came nearly opposite to the house where she had taken a lodging. A moderate gratuity rendered the men willing helpers, for they thought that they were conveying a sick man. Well muffled up and hid from observation, Lisle was conveyed to his bed, and Alice was relieved from an overwhelming burden. When they were alone she said,—

“I hope now that you are safe, but I have not known an hour’s peace since we left London. The town is full of the Royal followers, and of neutrals, who have come to offer their services or to shew their zeal; I do not think they would care what they did to appear zealous to the King.”

“And you think, Alice, that they would kill me?”

“If their deeds are as bad as their words they will kill anybody that is not a follower of the King.”

“You have taken care to spare me this pain, Alice, but you can never take from me the feeling that I am an exile.”

“I will share your feelings, and God will support us,” said Alice. “It is the exile’s lot to feel separation painful, because forced, and to fear for his country when he knows he is powerless to afford her help.”

“Yes,” said Lisle; “everything is strange. The language, the manners, the look of the houses, these curious craft, and broad-built men, from the little view I have had of them, say every one to me, ‘You are a stranger in a strange land.’”

Alice said, “But by God’s mercy safe from enemies,

and no danger to friends; able to live happily, and, it may be, yet to do good."

They retired to rest and slept soundly; in the morning Alice began to perform her household duties with her own hands. She got breakfast, and obliged her husband to continue his character of a sick man. This went on for nearly a week, Alice going out daily, and hearing rumours of the movements of the King's friends. She saw several boats filled with her countrymen, their boisterous mirth and loud curses convincing her that they were bound for England. At length she received a letter which told of the King's arrival in London, and of his reception by the people.

"It was time that we left," said Alice; "who could think that a nation could change in so short a time?"

Lisle said, "They will change again to-morrow. England may be happy for a time, but it will never be happy long under the Stuarts; they are a false, prodigal race, without any religious fear or honesty in them."

"What will they do to the Cromwells?" said Alice.

"They are great men, and may escape, but none of the leaders in the Protector's service will be spared; indeed, most have, with us, found safety in flight; we have never been quite unprepared since the great man's death. He could at any time have brought the country round again. He had crushed all foreign opposition, but he could not destroy the feelings of his countrymen, and fear of domestic troubles embittered his last years. A time will come, however,

when he will be known as a great man, and when England will honour his name."

By degrees the royalists left Amsterdam; and the English language would only have been heard on the Exchange, where a few merchants met to transact business, had not Alice soon after met faces that were familiar to her, friends in exile who could tell of losses, escapes, imprisonments, and finally banishment for life from England's fair fields and bright homes. They could not find a friend to help them. So completely did the nation seem to have rallied round King Charles, that had he been cruel he might have taken the lives of every one of his enemies, and of any who had opposed his rule; but instead of this he spent his time in pleasure, and took little care for public affairs.

When it appeared safe, Lisle walked out, at first with Alice, and after a time alone, and he soon received kindness and attention from the Dutch people. The burgomaster came to see him privately, and promised him protection for life and liberty, but advised caution, as the partizans of the King were very bitter against all who had been concerned in the late government, and especially against those who had signed the King's death-warrant. From the English merchants he received many kindnesses; he had been able to serve them when in authority; and through their hands he received money and presents from his friends in England. He was, however, often weary of his dull life, and at times fell into fits of despondency, from which Alice aroused him by urging him to constant exercise, and often walking with him. He had

lost all fear of danger from his enemies, when he observed in his walks that two men followed him, and seemed to be watching his movements. He immediately crossed a canal, and calling a boat, pulled for some distance; when seeing no one follow, he concluded that it was a mere idle fancy. But as Lisle was now more known, Alice resolved to change her residence, and to go more into the centre of the town, when she had found a house to suit her. She thought seriously of the alarms at which her husband now laughed, and said, "We will go near to the Town-house, because we shall be more under the burgo-master's protection."

Lisle said that he wanted no protection; that he was under the care of the Republic, and that no man would risk his own life to hurt him. "I have not made a personal enemy," said Lisle.

"No," said Alice, "but you have bitter enemies among the royal party, and we may as well be safe. None of our friends feel quite secure; for they say that there are some of the King's party recently come into the city, and they are here for no good."

"They are never anywhere for good," said Lisle, "but I do not fear them."

He continued his daily walks, sometimes thinking that he was watched, and then again ridiculing his fears; until one day, when walking through some corn-fields, he saw three men walking rapidly in a line with him, and making for a bridge across a canal by which he had to pass. He was alone, and without appearing to notice their movements he quickened his pace, and reached the bridge with them, for they

walked quickly, and although they had a greater distance to go, yet being young and active they were able to prevent his escaping them. He turned to face them, and perceiving they were his own countrymen he saluted them, and they said, "We want you."

"I think not," said Lisle; "I don't know anything about you."

"We know that you are John Lisle, and if you do not come peaceably you are a dead man."

They drew their swords: Lisle tried to defend himself, and running towards the bridge he kept his antagonists at bay by putting his back against a buttress. His hope was that he might prolong the contest until some passers-by would come to his assistance; but no one seemed to be near. The men, after one or two feints, perceived that they must make a dash at him or lose their opportunity; so, attacking him at the same moment, he was struck to the ground, and wounded on the shoulder of his sword-arm: Lisle dropped his weapon, and it was snatched up immediately. When they had bound his wounds and their own, they signalled to a boatman on the canal, who had evidently brought them up to enable them to follow Lisle without being seen.

"What are you going to do with me?" said Lisle; "have I done you any harm?"

"No," said one, "but you are going to learn to dance."

"Do you mean to hang me?" said Lisle.

"Oh no," said the men, "we are not going to hurt you, and we shall take you as tenderly as a babe to them that sent us."

"Ask no more questions," said one, who appeared to be the leader: "you fellows, take him without a word to the boat, and if any one speaks until we get to the 'Sea-Mew,' I will teach him a dance with the cats."

Lisle saw that it was useless to contend any more: they bound him hand and foot, and were about to put a gag on his mouth, when he promised silence. The leader said, "Yes, or instant death." He was then carried into the boat and covered over with reeds. For some reason, unknown to Lisle, they waited, and then pulled leisurely down the canal until they were overtaken by some barges, which they followed through the locks.

"What have you got there?" asked some boatmen.

"Only a few reeds," was the answer.

Theu there was a jabber of half-English, half-Dutch, and proposals to meet at the "Golden Lion," on the quay, in the evening. Lisle could hear every sound, but he felt that it was useless to cry out, for the leader of the party watched him, and by addressing the men shewed him that he was never left. After some hours he was uncovered, and asked to rise without making a noise: ropes were then attached to his body, so that he could be drawn up into a vessel which lay alongside, laden, and ready to put to sea.

When he got upon deck he asked why he was taken on board ship by violence? The captain came forward and said, "John Lisle, you are charged with being a traitor to your lawful king, and with conspiring to put him to death."

"I am no traitor," replied Lisle; "Charles Stuart

was fairly tried and condemned. I am living under the protection of the Dutch Republic, and you will answer for any harm that happens to me."

"No threats here," said the captain: "take him below, and if he gives any trouble, gag him, and overboard with him."

He was no sooner stowed away below than he heard preparations for leaving the quay. Fortunately a heavy fog had risen over the river, and it was only with great difficulty that they could work the ship clear of other vessels, and the captain raged like a wild beast when he found that he was detained.

"We shall be caught," said he; "I know that we shall not get clear off with him."

"Here's the pilot," said one of the sailors.

"Shall we sail, Overkirk?" said the captain.

"You're in a mighty hurry to be off, captain."

"Push her off if you can," said the captain; "if we can clear the coast we shall see our way again. You Dutchmen eat fogs, and drink fogs, and smoke fogs."

"And you Englishmen should not come here if you do not like our country.—A pipe, captain, and no more words."

About midnight the fog cleared, when the captain set sail. Lisle was on his way to England. He was deeply grieved for his wife's sake; his own fate he saw very clearly before him. But Alice was too energetic to neglect any chance of saving her husband. When he did not return at his usual hour, her suspicions were aroused; she went to the burgomaster, and finding him engaged, she wrote a note and sent it to him

by a servant, saying that her husband had not returned, and she feared for his safety. Asking the gentlemen with him to wait, the burgomaster came into the ante-room, and said he would send messengers to enquire after him, and order no more permits to pass the custom-house without the vessels being searched.

These orders occupied some time, so that while they were being carried out, the "Sea-Mew" had got under weigh, with her pilot on board. Alice went home, but could not rest, and about ten o'clock she went again to the burgomaster, who said that no one had been able to bring any tidings of her husband since he had left the city. He asked Alice to wait, and went to the quays to stimulate the men to their duty; there he heard that the "Sea-Mew" had gone off hastily, and that Overkirk was on board as pilot; and divining rightly that it was the vessel he was seeking, he ordered his own galley to be got ready to pursue the "Sea-Mew." Returning home, he told Alice that he had hopes of bringing her husband back; that a vessel had left the quay in a suspicious manner, that providentially the fog must have prevented it from getting any distance, and that his own galley was sure to overtake them before they got out of the Zuyder Zee. "Hans, my favourite pilot, shall go with the galley, and trust me, my dear lady, your husband will be soon at home again."

Alice returned to her lodgings, and spent the night in prayer. She had done all that she could, and trusting in the providence of God, she waited the result of the last efforts of the burgomaster to save her husband.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when the "Amsterdam" got under weigh, and Hans took the helm. An officer of the Republic with some soldiers came on board, and the master said, "Now, my lads, Overkirk is aboard the 'Sea-Mew'; they have got a good hour's start of us, and I think a little more. Keep the vessel well up to her work."

The orders which he gave were rapidly obeyed; a crew of picked men, used to the navigation of the river, and trained with a view of being pilots, they threaded their way through a forest of ships, and when the river seemed to be clear, began to crowd on more sail.

"What's the old burgo after?" asked some of the sailors, as they saw a cloud of canvas passing them rapidly.

"There's something wrong," was the answer.

"And old Hans will bring them up," was the reply.

The "Amsterdam" kept on her way, and whatever the "Sea-Mew" was doing, there was not much doubt that every effort would be made to bring her to before she could clear the coast or claim the protection of an English man-of-war.

"We are working out well," said the captain to Overkirk; "I shall drop you by evening if this wind holds."

"And it will hold," was the pilot's answer; "the breeze has stiffened a bit, and we have plenty of canvas for our ballast."

They passed vessels working up the river, and trying to get along by tacking; then they overtook heavily-laden merchantmen, who, although they knew the sailing qualities of the "Sea-Mew," wondered why she had so much canvas set. They were getting on rapidly, they met fewer vessels, and already were hoping to be able to haul to, and put the pilot on board a boat which they could see in the distance, when the captain's attention was called to a small galley with spreading canvas which seemed like a speck in the offing, but which was cleaving the waters around her into long lines of foam.

"What's this, pilot?" said the captain; "you have no pirates here, I hope?"

"No," said the pilot, "no sea-sharks trouble our waters, but there's plenty of land-sharks up the river," and the pilot cursed them roundly. Calling to a man, he gave him the helm, and raising a glass, he said, "It's the 'Amsterdam,' with the burgomaster's colours flying." Taking the helm again, he said, "Captain, are your papers all right."

"Yes," said the captain, turning pale; and going into his cabin, he brought out his papers and shewed the well-known city seal.

"All right now," said the pilot, "we will shew old Hans that somebody besides himself can steer under canvas in the Zuyder Zee."

"Do," said the captain. "Haul up another sail, and keep the main-sail and fore-sail wet." The men obeyed, part of them from fear, and all stimulated by a feeling of rivalry between the two nations. The pilot's eye was bright with emotion; he had as much

above him as the vessel could bear, and she almost quivered with the rapidity of her motion over the water.

"It's a very beautiful sight, captain, and one not to be seen every day; look at the 'Amsterdam,'" said he; "there is only one man in the world that would carry so much sail on that craft, and that is Hans; but he has not much ballast, so he'll be careful. He can hug those shoals closer than we can, and thus save a mile.—Beautifully shaved, Hans," said Overkirk; and he was enthusiastic in his praises of the seamanship of the "Amsterdam."

The captain said, "We can carry more sail, pilot."

"More! what more would you carry?" said Overkirk; "the 'Sea-Mew' staggers now, and you don't want to run her under water, do you?"

"No," said the captain; "but better there than let the burgo catch us."

"Ho, ho!" said Overkirk, "are you running away, then?"

"No," said the captain, carelessly; "but I don't care to be beaten by that scallop-shell."

"Scallop—scallop-shell!" said Overkirk; "she will be into us in half-an-hour, and nothing can prevent it, unless she should by any chance run on to the banks; but that is not likely with old Hans aboard."

The excitement of the pursuit increased on board the "Amsterdam" when they saw the "Sea-Mew" before them; they knew that they were gaining on her, and the master wished to fire a gun to make her bring ; but Hans said, "No, don't; old Kirk will say we

could not catch him; in half-an-hour, if he goes on this tack, I will run into him."

"I'll give you half-an-hour and three minutes, and then I fire," said the master.

"Very well," said Hans. "Now just look at the old boy; there he goes, with every stitch of canvas the ship can carry, and he is running among shoals that have brought many a brave fellow to an early grave; but he knows his road as well as if he was running down a canal."

"Does he know what he has aboard, think ye?" said the officer.

"Not he," said Hans. "He's as simple as a child off the river; he don't know nothing but steering, and it's not here and there one that can beat him at that; he's just a shewing us a bit of seamanship, and it's good too; he knows we have only just ballast enough to carry what's above us, and he can carry more than we can; but, Kirky, we shall soon have you."

"The captain is sailing for his liberty, if not his life," said the officer.

"Yes, but he couldn't carry his head as he does alone." Nothing escaped the eye of Hans, and he said that the "Sea-Mew" couldn't be better handled; they had not lost an inch of sea-room, but the "Amsterdam" was beating them by her being less deep in the water.

The half-hour had brought the ships nearly together. The officer stood with his watch in his hand and counted the minutes. One,—they gained, they could hail the "Sea-Mew;" two,—and they could see

distinctly every movement on deck; three,—and the gun boomed.

"There's the burgo's gun, I must haul to."

"No," said the captain; "no."

"Then you may take the helm," said Overkirk; "she'll have a shot into you in a minute."

"Very well, then," said the captain, and he began to bring up the vessel.

Meanwhile Hans watched their movements, lest by any trick they should escape him. When he saw that the sails were reefing, he then brought up the "Amsterdam," and lowering a boat, put the officers and soldiers with their arms into it, and ordered the men to pull for the "Sea-Mew." The officer told the men to be ready to put down any resistance, and thus prepared, they soon drew alongside the "Sea-Mew," and shewed their orders to search the vessel. They were immediately allowed to get on board, and the captain offered to surrender Lisle, who, he said, was below. The officer told him he must answer to the burgomaster for carrying away by stealth and by force a person enjoying the protection of the city of Amsterdam.

"And you will have to answer to the King of England for detaining one of his vessels with a traitor on board, who condemned the King's father to death."

"The Republic of Holland is the refuge for the unfortunate," said the officer, with dignity. Going below, he found Lisle lying in great pain and suffering from his wounds as well as from sea-sickness. He immediately addressed Lisle, saying that he was happy to be the means of assuring him of safety, and that he,

would be immediately taken back to the city. Lisle thanked him, and said he should be glad to have his wounds dressed, if any opportunity offered, before they went up the river. The officer said that they might meet with some man-of-war, when a surgeon should come to him, otherwise he would be obliged to wait their arrival at the city.

The return to Amsterdam was very slow; they were tacking for several hours; at length the wind veered round, and they made some way; but the sailors said they had run out too fast, and were going back again too slow. The captains who had been detained jeered them as they saw them brought back, waited upon by the "Amsterdam," and with soldiers on board. It was not until about midday that they arrived at their moorings, and that the crew of the "Amsterdam" were able to go ashore. The telegraph had announced the return of both vessels, and crowds lined the quays when they hove in sight; when it was known that Lisle was safe there was great shouting and noise.

The burgomaster's barge was manned, and followed by his officers, and accompanied by Alice Lisle, they rowed out into the stream, and were soon alongside the "Sea-Mew." The captain saw that he was in trouble; although he shewed every respect to the burgomaster, and ordered his men to assist them on board, he was uneasy and restless. When they were on board, Alice hastened to her husband, and although shocked by seeing him pale and wounded, she controlled her feelings, and welcomed him back. She then raised him up from his rough resting-place,

and began to dress his wounds before the doctor arrived ; Lisle looked his thanks, for he could scarcely speak.

In the meantime, the burgomaster had asked the captain by what authority he had carried off an Englishman residing under his protection.

"He is a regicide," said the captain. "I was told to bring him to England, and I should be rewarded for my trouble ; but for that matter I'd have brought him for nothing, for I would drown the lot of them if I had them aboard, and it's a pity I didn't fling this fellow overboard."

"Young man," said the burgomaster, "had you done so, you would have swung from that yard-arm before many days had passed over your head ; but you shall be tried by the laws of the country. Officer, do your duty."

The captain and men were ordered to get into the boat, and were taken to the city gaol.

"I am an Englishman," said the captain ; "you have no right to take me off my ship, and if I had been on the high seas you dared not to do it."

"You are now in the Dutch territory," said the burgomaster, "and you may think yourself fortunate if you ever see England again." Turning to the pilot, he said, "Overkirk, how was it you took this vessel out with a man on board."

"I never saw him," said Overkirk ; "at least, they said he was an Englishman, wounded in a brawl, that they were taking home, and they shewed me their
"

they right?" said the burgomaster.

"They had the city seal, and I did not trouble to read the papers when I saw that."

"It is well," said the burgomaster, "that you are not concerned in carrying off this unfortunate man, or I should have removed you from the list of pilots: be careful, Overkirk."

Hans looked out for Overkirk, and when he got ashore he said, "Well, old kidnapper, hasn't the burgo sent you to prison yet?"

"No, Hans; I never knew what they had aboard; I saw the seal on the papers, and that was enough for me."

"But when you saw us in chase why did you crowd on sail?" said Hans.

"I knew you was aboard, and I thought we would try a bit of seamanship; but there's no chance with the 'Amsterdam,' only I thought maybe a sail or two may go, and we outsail them. We had all we could bear, and I knew you could not carry so much for want of ballast."

"'Twas a good match, Kirky, but we've got you; come to the 'Lion,'" and the two pilots smoked their pipes, and talked over their run down the Zuyder Zee.

As soon as the "Sea-Mew" could be hauled alongside the quay, Lisle was lifted on deck, and carried from thence to his home. Alice walked by his side, the kind-hearted people cheered them as they passed, and offers of service were made by high and low. The hospitality of the city was well known, and Alice received kindness from friends and strangers. Dishes were sent daily from the burgomaster's table, and

when Lisle was better, the official barge was placed at his disposal, that he might take the air without fatigue. Alice was gratified by the kindness she received, but she observed that Lisle did not seem to rally. He was always anxious if left alone, and it was some time before he recovered so far as to be able to acknowledge in person the hospitality of the city and the kindness of its chief magistrate. When he did so, the burgomaster said that they had upon principle always extended the hand of kindness to political exiles; and he trusted that a day might arrive when the angry feelings which existed might pass away, and when Lisle would return to his happy country.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Lisles continued to reside at Amsterdam some time after the event we have related, experiencing daily kindness from the citizens, and respect from the exiles, who continued to arrive until they formed a little congregation, under one Elias Scattergood, an exiled minister, who had been ejected from a living into which he had been obtruded, but in which he had faithfully fulfilled his duties. The accounts which they received each year seemed to shew that England was fast declining in morals, and that she was without political influence on the Continent. Lisle did not, however, feel that there was any prospect of his 'o his own country, and as his health did not Alice proposed that they should go for a

time to Geneva, to try if the more genial climate would benefit him. It was not pleasant to go forth among strangers, and Alice said, "Let us only consider ourselves as travellers, who are going a short journey, and that we are some day to return and rest our bones in this old city, and among many kind friends."

"All life is a pilgrimage, and mine is now a weary one," said Lisle, "only I have you left to brighten it; I seem to live without any power of being useful."

"I am not sure that there is not good in quietness," said Alice; "we have been able to help many poor exiles here who would otherwise have been in penury."

"Yes," said Lisle, "but that is very different from the great life that I once led, when no day passed without subjects of importance to my fellow-creatures being discussed before me, and when I was able to influence counsels for their good. Look at England now, the prey of foreign harlots and the slave of French influence and morals; I know nothing worse than this for my country, and I see no hope, for the people are weary of changes, and submit to a lax rule rather than again struggle for their rights."

"Are they not, Lisle, weary too of being the tools of designing men? Are they not sick of seeing patriots who, raised to power by their means, despise them and trample upon them? We certainly hear no good of the English court, and if it were better than it is our friends would not admire it; but at all events we are not persecuted by their orders, nor is our property taken from us."

"It might be worse," said Lisle, "but we owe it rather to the natural indifference of the King than to any goodwill of his party."

The removal from Amsterdam was attended with many pleasing incidents. The congregation met for solemn prayer, and the minister invoked a blessing upon them; the poorer members volunteered little services in a spirit of kindness that is beyond price: and in the early spring they removed from a place they had learned to call home.

It was more than a month after they had left Amsterdam that they arrived at Geneva, with letters to a few friends; and their first arrival was not marked by any pleasing features. They were kindly received, but they found themselves obliged to learn another language, and to accustom themselves to an entire change of manners; but the climate made up for a great deal of small vexation. Lisle seemed daily to gain new life and strength; the wounds which had from time to time caused him trouble ceased to annoy; and the years rolled on in their even course without any changes. Occasionally an old friend who had escaped from the observation of the government, or compounded by the loss of some of his property, brought him news from England. Old companions and friends were passing away, and the bitterness of party feeling in a measure subsided. "But," he said to Lisle, "the England of your days is not." Lisle would ask, "Is there any hope of our return?" and every friend would answer "None." Lisle knew without enquiry, and Alice felt keenly the knowledge which he possessed, that whoever was

spared, no regicide would be pardoned. This it was that occasionally caused Alice so much suffering. Without any reason, when the time drew near that they had put the King upon his trial, Lisle would remain silent for days together, avoiding his usual walks, and only taking his food mechanically. He could not bear to be disturbed, and became angry if urged to do anything. As any exciting news reached him, these fits of gloom increased, until at length Alice was obliged to keep from him any information that tended to disturb his brain; and she usually accompanied him in his walks.

When they had forgotten the attempt at Amsterdam, they were alarmed by a sudden attack made upon Lisle while walking home in the evening in the street leading to the Lake. Fortunately, assistance was near, and before any serious injury could be effected, an alarm was given, and Lisle, who had only received a flesh-wound, was rescued from his adversary. The man was never known, and although much trouble was taken to discover who had inflicted the wound and attempted his life, the perpetrator remained undiscovered. Alice was greatly alarmed, and the shock so affected Lisle that he never entirely recovered from it. "They intend," he said, "to hunt me to death, and I may as well die, and spare them the commission of a great crime." He never rallied again: his illness was long; sometimes a day on the shores of the Lake, or a boat excursion, would raise his spirits and encourage hopes; but the hand of death was upon him, and he was pining away with home-sickness and weariness of political strife. Lisle

was never a revengeful man ; occasionally he had sternly done his duty, but he had never been wantonly cruel. He felt he did not deserve that the assassin's knife should pursue him daily, and cut off the only enjoyment left to his exile, the wandering amongst the beautiful scenery of his place of banishment. Alice nursed him tenderly, and often vigorously opposed the morbid feelings which became almost a disease. She read to him, prayed with him, shielded him from every painful association, and by her active goodness and daily study of his little wants she alleviated his sufferings.

When his end drew near, he wished to die at home, and Alice ventured to try a petition. It was refused. Although she would not tell Lisle, he said one day, "I shall rest here, Alice, shall I not?"

"Perhaps," said Alice ; "but do not speak of it now; you are not dying."

"I am not dying," said Lisle, "but soon to die. I cannot shut my eyes to my daily increasing weakness; and although I suffer no pain, I can see that I am decreasing daily. You have been a good wife, Alice"—

She burst into tears, overcome, as she seldom was, by those few words of praise. Lisle said, "Yes, a good wife. You have been my companion, adviser, and friend through a long and weary pilgrimage; you have been the same true woman that I found you in your father's house. Now when I am gone, go home, and dwell among your own people. Some of my friends will be kind to you for my sake, and my enemies will not, I trust, hurt you ; at least I hope

they will not persecute a woman." Alice could not speak; Lisle went on :—"Bury me beside my countrymen, for although an exile, I feel that I could wish even to mingle my dust with theirs. We shall have done then with all disputes of Royalist and Roundhead, and we shall rest, as Englishmen should, side by side, as men animated with one desire, the good of their country."

There was much sympathy shewn for Lisle by many eminent men in Geneva. The purely political question made men of the State regard Lisle as an exile in the cause of freedom; religious men, who saw him as the unbending Puritan, regarded him as a sufferer in the cause of religious truth; and his high character commanded respect even where men did not like his opinions. In England he was known as the regicide for whom the ruling powers offered a reward, and who was already condemned to death. Alice, who had seen his daily life, loved him with the love of a strong-minded and affectionate woman.

The sun was setting over the Lake. Lisle was looking out over the waters, appearing to enjoy the evening, when Alice observed the book which he had been reading drop from his hands. There had been no extraordinary change to cause her alarm, but she immediately ran to him. He tried to speak, but could only say "Alice!" then a heavy sigh and short struggle, and Alice was alone with him in death. She did not move for a few minutes, thinking to avoid disturbing him; but when she saw that all was over, she fell down, and wept over him, praying to God earnestly that if it were His will

she might be taken with him. He willed otherwise ; and in a few days Lisle rested, as he had wished, among his own countrymen, very near to another exile, who had died before they had come to Geneva. There were many to honour him, and to join in the sad procession which conveyed him to his grave ; and there were at Geneva, as there had been at home, many who could find, beneath the sterner virtues of the Puritan, the gentleness of heart and kindness in trouble which belong to the true Christian of every name and clime.

CHAPTER XXV.

ALICE did not like to leave Geneva immediately after her husband's death, but she felt herself bound by his expressed wishes to return to England. The death of Charles and the accession of James caused her to hope that she might be able to live unmolested and forgotten. She therefore waited a short time, and then took leave of her kind friends, and of the city which had sheltered her for several years. She resolved not to go direct to England, but to revisit Amsterdam, to see some of her husband's friends who resided there. She found, after a journey of more than a month, that her visit was not unexpected ; and the burgomaster said, if she would remain in the city she should always find protection from its laws in her person and in her property, and that he would undertake all the necessary business that devolved upon her in settling her husband's affairs.

She thanked him, and begged the Council's acceptance of a silver cup, to be used on festive occasions, which she said her husband had designed for them when he recollect ed the hospitality and kindness which he had received in the city of Amsterdam. Alice said that her residence was appointed by her husband, if she could be allowed to live in peace, and that it was at Batcombe Grange, where she had lived all her youth, and where he had first met her.

When it was known that she would leave the city, and that her visit was of friendship to the citizens, to see many who had been kind to her husband herself, she was offered hospitality in every house, and a passage to England whenever she chose to avail herself of it. After she had seen her poorer friends, and heard the wishes of many exiles, that they might soon return home again, she availed herself of the opportunity of two ladies, wives of merchants, going to London, and resolved to accompany them.

The departure from the quay recalled painful and pleasant recollections,—the loss of her husband, and his return to her again; the anxious hours that she had spent, and the kindness which she had experienced from many friends: and as she left the shores she remembered when first as a stranger she had set foot on the land really almost unknown.

The passage across to the Thames was without any incident. Alice suffered little, and was able to help her friends. She had grown so accustomed to think of others that she did without being asked little offices of kindness which we usually look for from old friends.

She was recognised at the custom-house immediately on landing, but the news of Lisle's death had preceded her, and she was not detained; her luggage was closely searched, but as she had carefully avoided carrying any letters that could excite suspicion, she was allowed to leave, and she began her journey to Batcombe Grange. She had written to say that she was coming to spend her days among them, and she could not control her impatience to look upon the village from which she had been so many years an exile. Everything looked strange, and none of the people recognised the quiet lady, whose hair was of silvery whiteness; yet when the rumour went to the parsonage that the good lady was gone to the Grange, Mr. Wentworth, anxious to shew that he remembered her kindness in bygone years, ordered the bells to be rung; and before she had been long in the house of her fathers, she paused to listen to the well-known sound, which carried her back to childhood's days.

She was welcomed home by strangers; there was not a person in the house that knew her, and yet they said that she was welcome for the good name she had left behind her. Mr. Wentworth, grown grey and much altered, came to see her on the evening of her arrival. He was so surprised at her altered appearance that he said, "I dare say you see me as much altered as you appear changed to me."

"I should have known you anywhere," said Alice, "but of course I recognise you here."

"And I," said Mr. Wentworth, "should not have known you; but then you have had many cares, and

the pains of an exile's life,—pains that your husband's kindness spared me," said Mr. Wentworth; and Alice learned for the first time not only of his goodness to the Rector of Batcombe, but to many good men from whom he differed in religious views.

"My husband," said Alice, "ever did what he believed was his duty: whether he was always right must be a matter of opinion; but I cannot think his lot should have been to die an exile, so much as he loved England and laboured for her good."

"Let us not dwell on that sad past," said Wentworth; "your husband's good deeds have, I trust, gone before him. There were many of us who would have been turned from house and home but for his interference; and he got many small allowances for ejected ministers from those who held their livings."

"And what has been the end of all these changes?" asked Alice.

"Much hardship," said Wentworth; "for on the return of the King all who would not use the Common Prayer-book were ejected, and I am afraid many have suffered greatly."

"And my lot must be cast in with theirs," said Alice. "I shall hope always to live on neighbourly terms with you, Mr. Wentworth, but it seems as if all my life was to be on the side of the unfortunate. God so orders it that some of us always find the poor and needy about us, and others pass through the world as if there was not a poor person in it, or such a thing as affliction."

"And do you still think that you cannot worship with us?" said the Rector; "you were once always at

Communion, and regular in your attendance on the Lord's day."

"Yes," said Alice, "and probably if you were the outcast and persecuted I should be with you to-day; but I have worshipped with exiles, heard their tales of suffering, and therefore I must suffer with them."

"Whatever you may do," said Wentworth, "you shall receive no molestation from me, my dear Madam, either in word or deed. I could have wished that it had pleased God to lead you back again to the Church of your childhood, and—"

"It has not been so."

"—and I hope that I have only done my duty in saying we should welcome you at church again."

"You have done very kindly," said Alice.

"Then," said the Rector, "good-bye. Let us live in charity and good will, hoping that a day may yet come when we shall unite in worship and praise."

Without sacrificing her opinions, Alice resolved to avoid offending the Rector. She was grateful for his kindness and frank conduct, and also for little thoughtful acts which shewed that he considered her comfort and happiness; she therefore declined to allow any meeting of the sectaries, as they were called, in her house, but she took a room and attended the meetings of the ejected clergy, all of whom held Puritan opinions, and followed the discipline of the Genevan Churches.

The character of the house was soon known to men who often needed food and shelter. Batcombe Grange was called Zoar, and they never wanted for able ministers, nor for information where they could be usefully

employed. Alice had sometimes one or two poor families in her house at a time, and she was obliged to write to friends to help her to find them employment: some got appointments as schoolmasters, or, if unmarried, as tutors in families favourable to Puritan doctrine; others, less able, were helped into little trades, and some learned handicrafts and preached in lone villages to a few hearers. Alice, while maintaining worship for herself and those who thought with her, was careful to avoid leading the villagers from their church; she did not wish to annoy, and she saw that Mr. Wentworth, zealous as he was for his own views, carefully respected hers, and would even say that he knew the place of their meeting. Batcombe thus enjoyed peace, while religious and political strife walked through the land.

Alice Lisle had not been long at the Grange before she heard rumours of some great deliverance for the Lord's people, as they called themselves. She refused to take any part in the political movements, or to aid with money any attempt to subvert the throne. No secret was made of the intention of some great man to deliver England from a popish king and cruel advisers.

Suddenly proclamations from Monmouth were found in every hand, and it was known that the Duke of Monmouth intended to try to obtain the crown of England and to rule on Protestant principles. The sectaries were much elated, and Alice Lisle was equally depressed.

"It cannot succeed," she said; "if we failed to impress the people favourably when such men as

Cromwell and my husband were alive, what success can we now hope for?"

There were ready answers. There are always a few needy enthusiasts to fan the flames of rebellion and civil war; but when they first hear of a check they cry out, "Undone, we are undone!" Alice knew this; she smiled as they told her the Duke had obtained this or that success, and warned them to be quiet when she heard he was advancing on London.

It did not take long to dispel the delusion; the King rapidly collected his troops, pursued the Duke of Monmouth to Sedgemoor, routed his army, and put an end to all the hopes of the Nonconformists. Alice was thanked by many, who, but for her kind advice, would have been compromised.

Shortly after the battle two weary, footsore men applied to her late in the evening for food and shelter, representing themselves as ejected ministers, trying to escape from prosecution, for preaching in towns contrary to law, and assembling the brethren to worship God. Alice knew one of the preachers, for he had officiated in her little meeting-house on his way to Taunton, when he carefully concealed his intention of joining the rebel army; the other was a lawyer, distinguished among the Puritan party, and obnoxious to government. When they came to her door, Alice met them, and they said, "Pray let us enter."

"You appear sadly distressed, Mr. Hickes," said Alice.

"Indeed we are, Madam," replied Hickes, "and your former goodness has induced us to come here for shelter; we are afflicted for matters of our conscience."

"If so, you have well come here," said Alice, "and you shall have rest and shelter." Alice would not ask them any questions, for she did not wish to know why they had fled; their distressed condition pleaded for them, and when they had taken food, they were shewn to a chamber to rest. They had been tracked to within a few miles of Batcombe, and then been entirely lost sight of; for they had walked across the country through bye-roads and fields, and altogether avoided, as they hoped, the observation of the country people; they therefore looked upon their refuge as secure, and as likely to be unknown to their pursuers.

CHAPTER XXVI.

EARLY in the morning Hickes and his companion, being uneasy at their position, resolved to hide themselves in the house and outbuildings; they therefore roused Alice Lisle, and told her they feared a strict search would be made for them; she therefore placed one in an old unused chimney, before which an oak-chest had long stood, and the other was hid in a malt-house, behind some wood that had been placed there to dry. Hickes positively denied to Alice that he had joined Monmouth's army, and Nettlethorp's silence left a painful impression that he was more implicated in the rebellion than he liked to confess. Alice did not wish to know of their guilt, as she knew of their misfortunes.

After morning prayers had been said, and almost

at the moment that the family were sitting down to breakfast, an officer made his appearance, and, bowing to Alice, asked if she was the mistress of the Grange.

She answered him, "Yes; and you are welcome to the Grange."

"I am likely," he said, "I fear, to be an unwelcome visitor. There are rumours that you have harboured rebels, who have fought against the King at Sedge-moor."

"Not to my knowledge," replied Alice; "this house is the refuge of all the ejected ministers, and they come and go so frequently, and are so often obliged to conceal even their names, that I assist them without asking their business."

"But," said the officer, "thereby you help the King's enemies; and if any are found here you will have to go to Winchester gaol."

"It will not be my first visit to a prison," replied Alice, with dignity; "and my course is too nearly run, young man, for me to be frightened from acts of Christian charity by the threats of imprisonment."

The officer left her, and having placed some men to watch the outside of the walls, he began to search the out-buildings and stables: no one was found; then they tried the malthouse, and thrust their swords into the faggots, almost touching Nettlethorp; they then entered the house, and ransacked cupboards, opened chests, and sounded the walls. They could not find any trace of the fugitives; yet the officer said that he was sure they were concealed in the house. As they were leaving a bedroom, apparently long unused, the officer saw a single piece of compressed dirt, as if it

had fallen from the shoe of a man who had travelled on foot; he suspected some one was in the room, and he removed the chest that he might look up the chimney; seeing that the light was obstructed, he called to a soldier for his gun, and he was about to fire, when Hickes surrendered himself and came down the chimney, covered with soot and dirt. His hands were tied behind him, and he was removed into another room, a soldier standing guard over him. Alice was told that she must consider herself under arrest. She said quietly, "God's will be done."

When Hickes recovered from his fright, and was able to speak, he told the officer that he had obtained protection under the plea that he was fleeing from punishment for his religious opinions; that he was known to Lady Alice as a preacher of the Gospel; and that he had ministered in her presence on his way to the west.

Alice sat down to her repast as if she were only a spectator, and quite unmoved by her danger. She urged Hickes to take food, and she gave him money. When she rose from the table, observing that the soldier followed her, she said there was no occasion to follow her, she had only helped unfortunate men, and she would not fly to avoid punishment, if it had become a crime in England to succour the distressed.

The soldier said that he must do his duty, that she was his prisoner.

Alice sent to the officer, and asked permission to prepare to leave her home, and to send for Mr. Wentworth.

He said, "You will not, of course, attempt to escape."

"No," said Alice; "I am conscious of no wrong-doing; why should I try to run away because I have helped men in trouble, and where should I run to?" She began giving brief directions to her household, and packing up a few clothes, that she might be ready for her journey.

Having found one of the fugitives, they rightly concluded that the other was concealed, and they returned to the outbuildings; they were again foiled, but the officer said, "Turn over these faggots." The soldiers did not like the work, for they were rotten and dry: but at last they came upon Nettlethorp, crouched in a corner, and evidently determined that no wound should induce him to cry out: his clothes were actually torn with the points of the swords, yet he was uninjured. There was a loud shouting, and Alice knew that they had found the unfortunate man: she offered him refreshments, and they waited while he got some food, and then left the house.

Mr. Wentworth came as they were leaving, and Alice was glad to see him, for she feared that he might not like to interfere in her behalf. When he saw her in the hands of the soldiers, he spoke to the officer, saying it was impossible that she could be guilty of any offence against the State; that he knew she had prevented many from joining the Duke of Monmouth, and that, although a sectary, she was kind to all, and especially benevolent to men of all parties when in trouble.

"Yes," said the officer, "she has harboured rebels

against the King's government, and my orders are to seize not only rebels but all who harbour them."

"But surely you have some discretionary power," said Wentworth; "suppose these unhappy men had come to me, a well-known royalist, and I had helped them as distressed ministers, would you drag me away to Winchester? and if not me, surely you may spare a distinguished lady."

"I have distinct orders," said the officer, "and I must not disobey them. It is in the power of others to hear all that you may say. I can only execute the orders entrusted to me exactly, or I must take the unpleasant consequences that are sure to follow."

Alice was treated with great respect, and allowed to converse freely with Hickes and Nettlethorp, who both expressed their deep sorrow that they had brought her into so great trouble.

"I do not desire to live," said Hickes; "when I fled from Sedgemoor I thought that we might rally again, and that England's liberties were not entirely gone; but I am in despair; we have a hard-hearted papist on the throne, and he will respect neither the laws nor the liberties of the country, and religion will soon cease, unless men are as determined as our fore-fathers were."

Nettlethorp was silent, but completely bowed down by his misfortunes, he neither maintained the fearless spirit of Hickes, nor the calm resignation of Alice. He sighed deeply, and was painfully affected by the prospect of death that awaited him.

Alice tried to cheer him with hopes of mercy; the King had gained a great victory, and he might there-

fore be merciful, and hope to win men to his cause by moderation.

"Madam," said Nettlethorp, in despair, "I know the King's character too well to hope for any mercy. I hope that I do not look on death with a mere terror of dying; I have a wife and four little children dependent upon me." He groaned with anguish of mind when he spoke of them.

Alice said, "God will provide for them, Mr. Nettlethorp. He hath not given us over for a prey into their teeth."

"I have no hope, no hope, no hope," said the stricken man.

"I know not what awaits us," said Alice; "God's will be done. He has always good in store for us."

"Yes," said Hickes, "I leave my family and my cause in His hands. I know what is said of the tender mercies of the wicked, and I expect only cruelty from my enemies."

Nettlethorp shed tears, but said nothing.

Alice turned to Hickes, and said, "Mr. Hickes, where are your children?"

"I hope, Madam, in London, in the house of some good Samaritan; we have gone from place to place, so as not to burden any, that I cannot say where they may be."

"Then you have no home," said Alice.

"Only what the good God puts it into the hearts of men to give me; yet I have never known absolute want until the day when you relieved us: I had then ~~been~~ ^{been} ~~two~~ ^{four} days with only a little dry corn, which we ~~were~~ ^{had} in the fields as we came along. I know

not how we got to your door, which I would to God we had never entered."

"Say not so, Mr. Hickes," said Alice; "you came, I hope, because you expected to find relief in distress, and I thank God that I have relieved you: if it be His will that I suffer for it, I shall only follow at a distance Him whom wicked men crucified without a cause."

"There is no justice in the land," said Hickes, "and therefore, Madam, I am troubled for you. It is not Christ's law that prevails anywhere; I have seen, and so has brother Nettlethorp, the horrible butcheries of the west country: they who serve the King are worse than infidels or Mahometans, and the blood of the saints, shed at Sedgemoor and in the villages round, will cry up to heaven against King James and his family." Hickes spoke with animation.

Alice said gently, "Mr. Hickes, I wish you had felt it to be within your duty to avoid the Duke of Monmouth's camp; you are a minister of peace, and I am sure found no pleasure in the loose conduct of a camp."

"No, Madam," said Hickes; "but I hailed the Duke as a Joshua, a leader of the true Israel of God against the enemies of truth."

"Have many of our brethren fallen?" asked Alice.

"Yes, many; the hearers are scattered far and wide, and who will now dare to gather the few sheep in the wilderness?"

"Yes," said Alice, "I ask who? for I think of my few friends at Batcombe; but I hope soon to be among them again."

When they arrived at a roadside inn, the soldiers halted, and requested their prisoners to dismount; the officer rode up and assisted Alice, saying to her, he was sorry to be obliged to perform so painful a duty.

Alice thanked him for his kindness, and he shewed her a room, saying that he should be obliged to place a sentry at her door, but that she could have whatever she wanted: she then ordered some plain food and partook heartily of it: she knew that her fellow-prisoners could provide for themselves, for she had supplied them with money. Alice had brought with her a Bible, which she asked permission to read, and it was granted; so that when she was alone she could enjoy the same occupation that she made a part of her daily home-life. She had not, however, the power to read long; excitement was followed by weariness, and when she lay down she slept soundly. Early in the morning a loud knocking at her door awoke her to consciousness of her situation, she arose, and dressing quickly, came to the door of her room and announced to the sentry that she was ready to depart. "Your food," he said, "will be served directly;" and in a few minutes her morning meal was spread upon a large box. Alice asked a blessing, and enjoyed her breakfast; she seemed to be without any fear for the future, and so conscious of her integrity and innocence that she was strong against any accusers.

Nettlethorp was less depressed; but Hickes became more silent and anxious as they began to draw nearer to Winchester. The day was dark, and the wild 'lew for a time in their faces, so that they

could not converse together; but Hickes again referred to his conduct in the late troubles. "I would not," he said, "have brought you into danger had I known it; but we were pursued, and I suggested to brother Nettlethorp that by crossing the country we should reach your house, where I had only a few weeks before been so kindly received."

"Do not speak again of this," said Alice. "God will order all things for my good. I have had many troubles, and have lost all that were dear to me: when my time is come, I know that I shall be called home; but it is not possible that I can suffer very much for helping you in your great distress:" and she added, smiling, "I do not fear a prison, it is my inheritance; my father was a prisoner at Winchester, and he was delivered, as I hope we shall be."

Hickes did not reply, for the weather was bad, and they could only speak to each other in a loud voice and with difficulty.

CHAPTER XXVII.

It was towards evening when they drew near to Winchester, and caught sight of the cathedral tower in the dusk. Hickes and Nettlethorp sobbed heavily as they entered the castle gates; Alice was unmoved.

"We are not here for any crime," said Hickes.

"That is our consolation," answered Nettlethorp. "They will treat it as a crime," again said the unfortunate man, in great agony of mind.

"Be of good courage, Mr. Nettlethorp," said Alice,

"for my father lay in this prison for many weary days ; they prepared him here for heaven, but he died at home, and is buried at Batcombe. Winchester is a good omen of deliverance."

When they had dismounted, Alice thanked the officer, who appeared desirous to escape from any thanks, for his civility. It was dangerous to be even commonly humane, and therefore there was more outward roughness than they had hitherto experienced. The gaol was full of prisoners, so Hickes and Nettlethorp were turned in among murderers, house-breakers, cut-purses, and with a large number of men who had taken part in the rebellion ; some of whom had only wished the Duke well, while others had helped him. The unfortunate men were very miserable. Alice was placed in a cell by herself. It was too dark to see, and her books remained in a box with her clothes, which the governor had taken, with some letters, into his own custody. She repeated aloud a Psalm that had grown familiar to her in her afflictions :—"Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice : let Thine ear be attentive to the voice of my supplications." It relieved the silence of her cell to hear her own voice ; she knelt down, and prayed fervently for herself and her companions. She did not feel inclined to sleep, and she tried to recall the time that her father had spent in that prison, and followed him in thought as day after day he looked upon the dull, cold walls : then she chided herself for seeming to despond, and found a refuge from painful thoughts in prayer for others, until, overcome by fatigue, she slept, to dream

of home, and the people at Batcombe, who seemed as if watching to do her some service. She woke to see the morning dawn into her cell, and to feel that she was a prisoner.

A few days passed away, and Alice felt her imprisonment so wearing to her spirits, that she begged to be allowed some occupation, and she was permitted to walk among the other prisoners; but so terrible was the language, and so brutal the exhibition, that she returned to her cell. She was soon informed that she was to be put upon her trial for harbouring rebels who had been in arms against the King's government. A special commission was issued, to hold its sittings at Winchester. When told at a later period that the time of her trial was drawing near, Alice replied, "I have nothing to fear; I am quite resigned to God's will; I am able to prove that I prevented many from joining in the rebellion; and as to Hickes, I only knew him as a distressed minister, and Nettlethorp I never saw till he came in a state of starvation to my door." The two men were overwhelmed with grief when they heard that Alice Lisle was to be put upon her trial for her life. They were unable to speak to each other, and were all treated with great rigour from the moment that the commission was appointed; and when they heard that Judge Jeffreys was to be the judge who tried them, they gave up all hope of life.

It was soon known in prison when the judge arrived in Winchester. He opened his commission on the day after, and Alice was immediately arraigned. She prayed fervently to Heaven for guidance, and was so conscious of her innocence that she treated the

whole matter as one of scarcely ordinary importance to herself; she was most anxious about her fellow-prisoners, whom she knew to be guilty.

The trial excited great interest. Gentlemen from Hampshire and from the West came up to see and hear what was done: some hoped to benefit friends, some to propitiate enemies. Alice Lisle was well known by reputation. She had many friends among the clergy, whom she had assisted largely in her more prosperous days. Some had heard of her devotion to her father, of her long exile with her husband. Then the strangeness of the accusation, that it was treason to help any one who had fled in a state of misery and starvation from a field of battle; the people said no one could punish a man for such deeds, and it was wanton cruelty to try a woman;—she must be acquitted.

When Alice came to the bar, every eye in court was turned upon her. She had a subdued appearance, and looked pale from imprisonment. Her hair was white with years and care, but her eye retained almost the brightness of youth. She appeared as if she knew that there was nothing that an accuser could say against her, and the benevolence of her character could be traced in her placid features. When called upon to plead, she said in a clear, distinct voice, audible throughout the court, "Not guilty!" After the jury had been sworn, an objection was raised that was fatal to any legal conviction,—neither Hickes nor Nettlethorp had been convicted of rebellion; they were not traitors, for they might establish their innocence, and thus put an end to any possible proceedings

against Alice Lisle, for she was not accused of harbouring rebels in general, but these men in particular. Judge Jeffreys knew that the objection was valid in law, but it was his first victim ; he came to hang and burn, and if she escaped, it would encourage juries in mercy whom he wished to familiarize with blood. He cursed every man as a traitor who would advise such a plea or admit it ; he stormed at the jury until they were humbled before him. The trial proceeded. He passed over gross prevarication in the witnesses for the prosecution, and he supplied meanings never intended to be given to the words of poor country people who were dragged unwillingly before him. A witness was in attendance to prove that Hickes had preached to them a few weeks before his apprehension, and therefore was known not to have wished to join the rebellion. Jeffreys alarmed the man so much that he was unable to speak from terror, and he left the witness-box unable to utter a word.

When all the evidence had been taken, and the witnesses had been sufficiently frightened by the oaths and curses of the Judge, Alice was put upon her defence. She said that she knew nothing of Nettlethorp ; but she knew that Hickes was in difficulties for field-preaching, and she thought that his companion might have been in the same trouble ; that she had always been careful to relieve distress rather than to enquire into its cause. She said she did not consider that it was just that any man should be persecuted for his religious opinions, and that Mr. Wentworth, the rector of Batcombe Grange, could tell them that she was a friend to the clergy

in their troubles ; she had helped more ejected clergymen than ministers of her own views : that she had not helped rebellion, but hindered it ; and that she was not guilty of harbouring traitors, for no persons in her house had been adjudged as traitors by the law. The Judge summed up, commenting on the character of the witnesses, and abusing Presbyterianism and the Independents as roots of rebellion and the causes of all England's troubles. He told the jury that John Lisle, the husband of the prisoner at the bar, had signed their sovereign's death-warrant ; he raised every prejudice and inflamed every passion that he could think would excite them against the prisoner. He could not subdue them ; and when they wished to retire, he asked what they could want to retire for ; the case was so clear they might agree without leaving the box. As they left they looked at Alice : she neither trembled nor shed tears, but seemed as if she had been only an uninterested spectator of their proceedings ; she looked occasionally at the Judge when he was abusing witnesses, but he was not abashed. The jury were long in consultation. Jeffreys sent a message that if they could not agree they should be locked up for the night. They began to be frightened, and asked to consult with the Judge. The foreman said they had no prospect of coming to any agreement, for they did not think the charge sufficiently proved. It was a virtual acquittal. Alice raised her eyes, and her lips were seen to move as if she was thanking God for thus allowing her innocence to be proclaimed. The Judge rebuked them sharply ; and after another consultation, they

came in with a verdict of "Guilty!" a verdict that it was evident they had given rather from fear of the Judge than because they thought Alice Lisle guilty.

Alice did not utter a word; she preserved a calm and dignified demeanour: when she was led away from the dock she resigned herself to die, and said to her keeper that she should soon trouble them no more. She began forthwith to make a final arrangement of her affairs, to leave the world without any neglect of duties. Every hearer in court was surprised at the verdict, but they said Jeffreys knew that Alice was rich, and that he hoped to get a good bribe to save her life; he knew, as they all knew, that she was neither guilty, nor tried nor condemned according to law; if he could get money he would be satisfied, and perhaps imprison Alice for a year.

In the morning the court was again crowded. Alice was once more brought to the bar; and the Judge, bearing upon him the marks of an over-night's debauch, took his seat on the bench. After the usual preliminaries, he delivered the sentence of the Court, that Alice Lisle should be burned to death the same afternoon, in the market-place. A thrill of horror ran through the court: women were carried out fainting, men wept, indignation and disgust marked every countenance. Alice said, "The will of the Lord be done;" and left the dock to prepare for burning. The Judge was unmoved; but the shock was so great that the whole town was excited. The cathedral clergy in a body remonstrated, and insisted that there should be delay; representations poured in upon Jeffreys until he was obliged to grant a few days'

delay. It was immediately announced to Alice that they had procured a respite. "It will not be for long," she said, "but I am glad to have time to learn how to die. I can meet death joyfully, though the thought of the fire is very, very terrible. Yet what is this to suffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Why should I tremble at suffering for an hour?"

During the next few days every effort was made to save Alice. Money was given to the favourites at Court, and all means were tried to propitiate Jeffreys. Men of rank condescended to intercede with the Judge, but all that could be obtained from the man of blood was, that she should be beheaded and not burned. When the change was announced to Alice, who was allowed to see her friends after sentence had been pronounced, she thanked all who had interceded for her. "Now," she said, "the passage is sharp but very short. I feared lest my constancy would be shaken by the burning, and lest I should not be able to glorify God in the fire; now I will rejoice for so easy a passage from time to eternity." She joined earnestly in the prayers that were offered up by the clergy on her behalf, but when they attempted to offer consolation, she said, "I need none; I am more than ready to die; I would I were as fit as I am willing to leave this troublesome world."

She expressed a wish to see Hickes and Nettlethorp the day before she was put to death, and it was granted her by the kindness of her gaoler. When me into her presence they fell on their knees, treated her forgiveness for having caused her he bade them rise, saying that they had

helped her to a shorter road to heaven, and that they ought not to sorrow but to rejoice.

"It is cruel to have to die for shewing kindness to starving men," said Hickes.

"It is better, if the will of God be so, to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing," said Alice. Then, taking two parcels of money, she gave one to each, saying that the King had shortened her days and made her wants very few, but that he was sending her to the tribunal of the King of kings. Alice asked Hickes to pray for her, and to remember her on the morrow. The poor man knelt down, and with tears and prayers commended her to God's mercy and goodness. They were then removed, and Alice was alone. She distributed presents among the keepers of the jail, and afterwards devoted her time to prayer. Then she retired to rest, and it was observed that she slept as if nothing disturbed her mind.

The last morning of her days broke bright and clear. A few rays of light penetrated the cell, and Alice seemed to feel the pleasant change in the weather. She sat down to read the sufferings of the Redeemer, and then dressed herself for the scaffold. She was offered food, and begged to take some to give her strength to go to the market-place. She consented, and resumed her devotions until the tolling of the bell announced that her hour was come.

When the sheriff was admitted she spoke kindly to him, and offered every facility to the men who bound her hands. She then said farewell to those around her, and prayed that they might all meet in peace at last. The procession moved forward, and Alice began

her journey to death. It was with difficulty the sheriff's men could make their way through the crowd, who cursed the King, and the Judge that had sentenced an innocent woman to die. Alice did not utter a word; but when she came to the scaffold, and was assisted to kneel, the crowd remained silent while she prayed; after a few minutes she gave herself into the hands of the executioner, and as he folded back her dress and asked her forgiveness, the assembly were melted to tears. She died without any anger, or any wish, except to submit to the law. Laying her head on the block, after a short prayer, audible to all near her, the fatal axe fell, and Alice Lisle ceased to exist.

Such was the end of one who had never turned a deaf ear to the pleadings of humanity, and who was one of the greatest ornaments of the Puritan party.

